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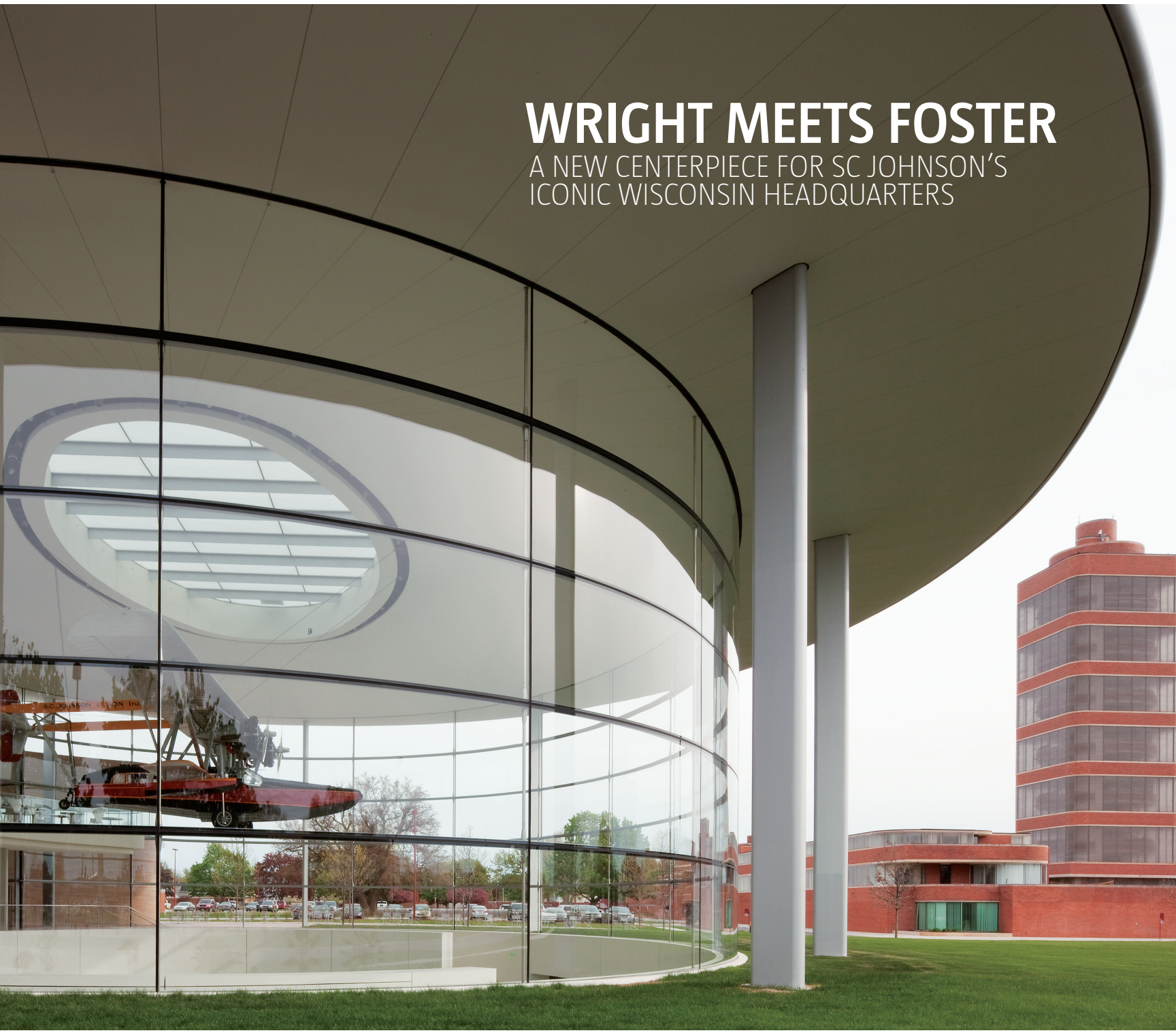

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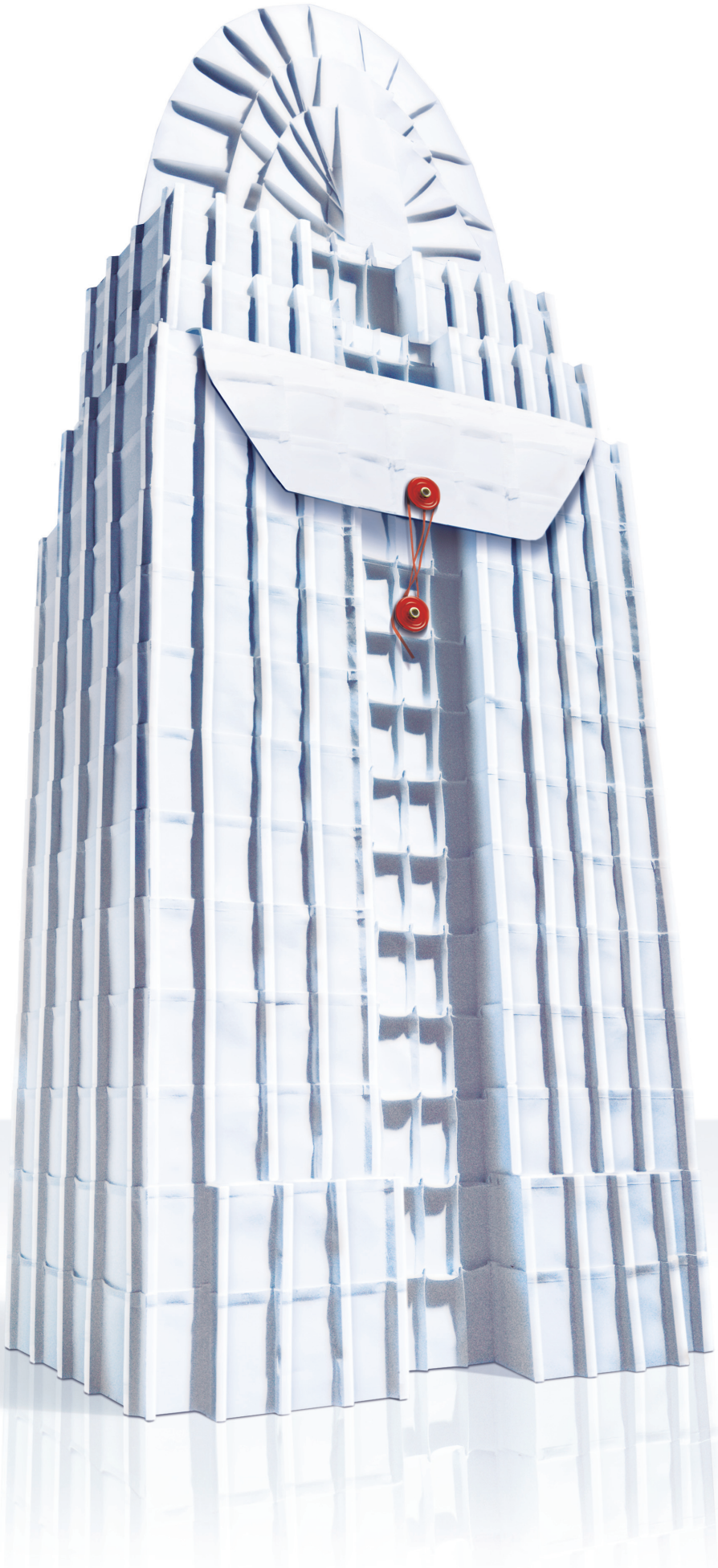

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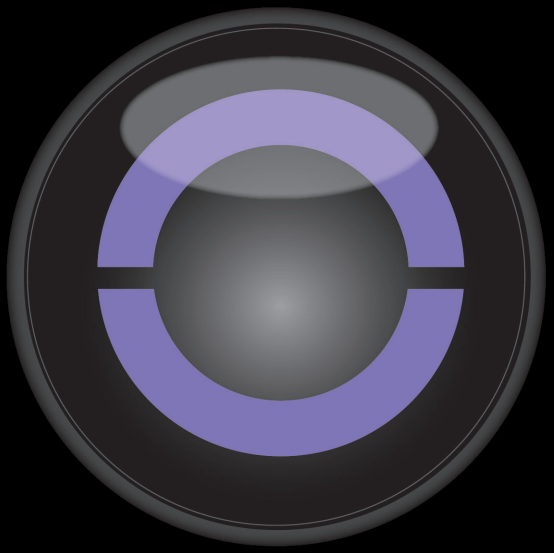

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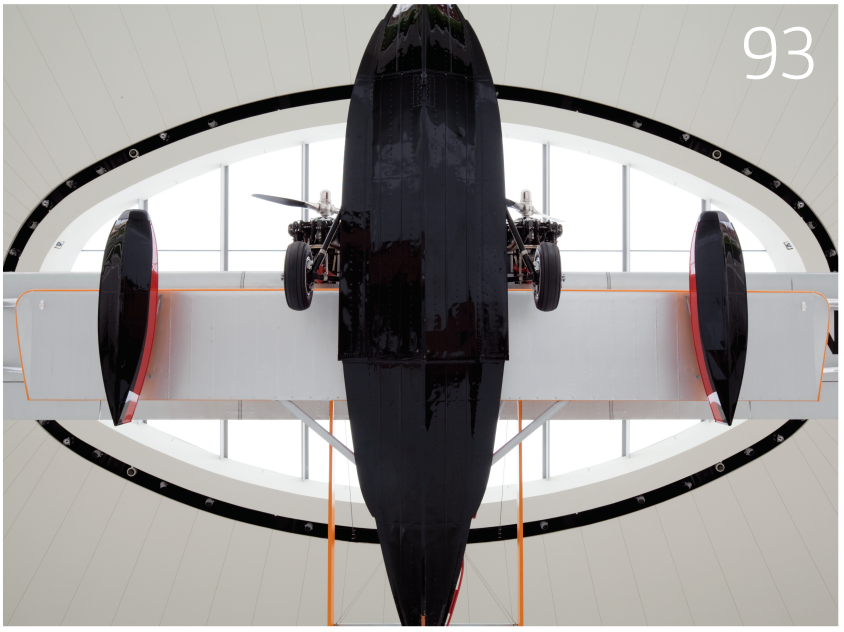

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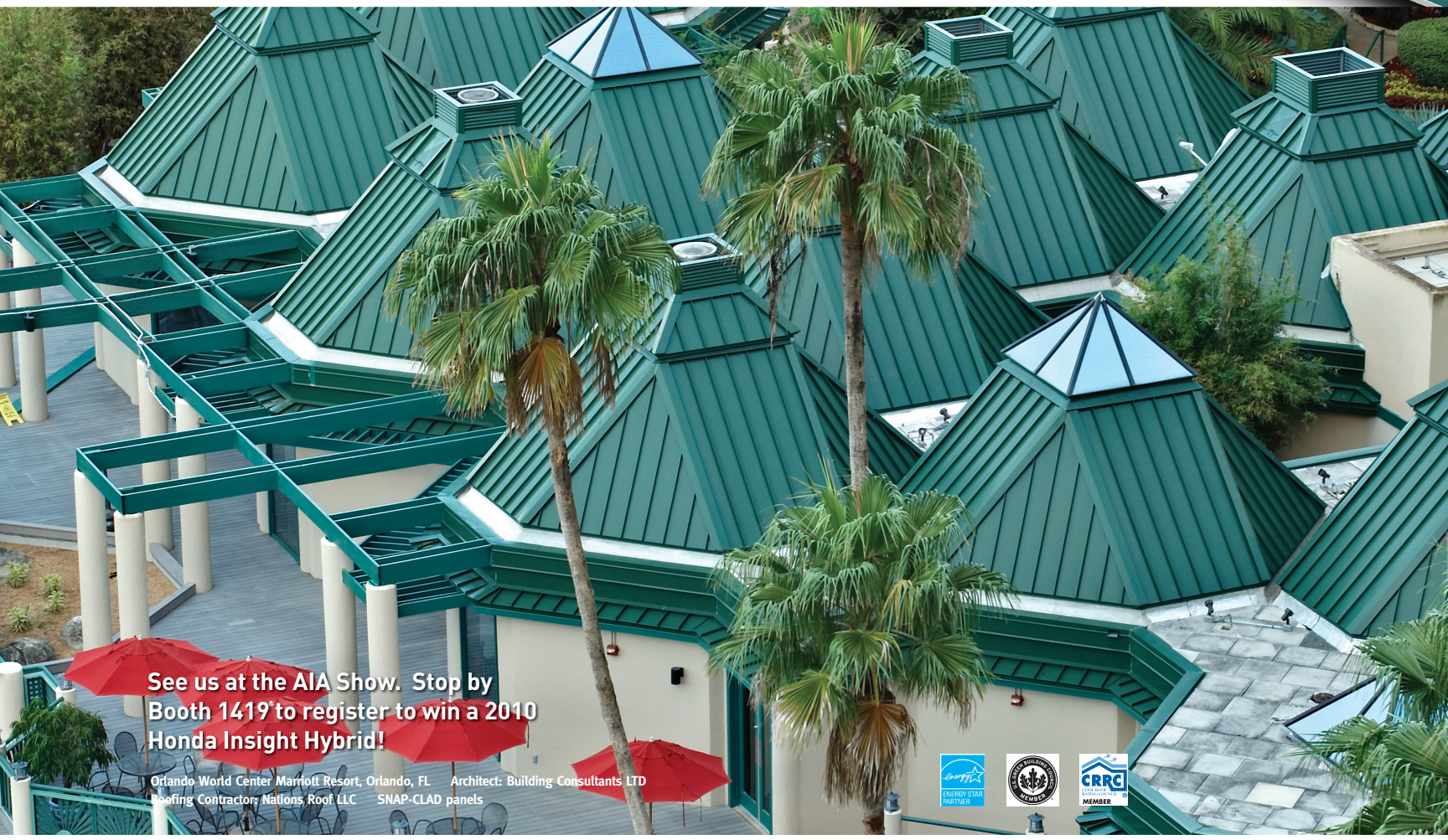
"Our Town, Our Jobs," page 84

It was while editing the ARCHITECT Newswire—our daily e-mail newsletter that compiles each day's architecture-related news—that contributing editor Bradford McKee started to notice how many squabbles were arising around the country over public projects being awarded to "carpetbagger" firms. His feature article on that topic this month caps off three years of excellent reporting for the magazine. We offer heartfelt congratulations to Brad as he moves on to *Landscape Architecture* magazine, where he's been appointed editor-in-chief.

ON THE COVER
FOSTER + PARTNERS' FORTALEZA HALL ON THE S.C. JOHNSON RACINE CAMPUS. PHOTOGRAPH BY TODD EBERLE.

Green with envy



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SOME FINE PRINT

I BELIEVE THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE AIA AND HANLEY WOOD, ARCHITECT'S PUBLISHER, WILL BE GREAT FOR THE ARCHITECTURE PROFESSION.

YOU MAY HAVE HEARD THE NEWS that, as of next January, ARCHITECT will be the official magazine of the American Institute of Architects.

I believe the partnership between the AIA and Hanley Wood, ARCHITECT's publisher, will be great for the architecture profession. How so? For one thing, Hanley Wood is a smart company that produces award-winning magazines, and as a result ARCHITECT will be around for a good, long time. Longevity is no small matter in an age when design publications have been folding left and right. Remember *Domino*, *House & Garden*, *I.D.*, and *Metropolitan Home*? They were fantastic magazines, and their loss amounts to a tragedy for design.

The reason why the design media has collapsed so dramatically may seem plain enough: a huge loss of advertising dollars due to the housing bust in 2007 and the ensuing Great Recession. But I also blame the conglomerate culture that has come to dominate media in general. How can a pack of MBAs—nice people, presumably, but bean-counters, undoubtedly—make informed business decisions about magazines serving an industry that is alien to them?

Hanley Wood, by contrast, serves only one industry: building design and construction. Our history and culture is rooted in architecture. It's not just that there are prints by Julius Shulman and Robert Venturi in the conference rooms. Hanley Wood actually was founded by two AIA employees: Mike Hanley and Mike Wood, the in-house publisher and lead advertising executive, respectively, for the *AIA Journal*. They established the company in 1976, with just one client: the AIA and the *AIA Journal* (later rebranded as *Architecture*).

The two Mikes managed the AIA's magazine business until the AIA sold it in the mid-1980s. Today, Hanley Wood encompasses some 30 publications and their websites, a marketing division, a data group, and a trade show business—all in service to building design and construction. So when I joined Hanley Wood in 2006, for the launch of ARCHITECT, the collective corporate enthusiasm for the project was palpable—it had all the flavor of a happy homecoming.

Obviously, I've drunk the company Kool-Aid. But I'm no blind follower—I roll on evidence. After four years at Hanley Wood, I have yet to witness our leadership make a move on ARCHITECT without weighing the potential effects on the quality of the content and on the needs of the readership. My bosses care about the bottom line, to be sure, but they are wise to the fact that the bottom line is inextricably linked with the well-being of the industry we serve.

My own ties with the industry are just as strong. I went to architecture school and have spent my entire career in the field, as a writer, editor, and curator. I love architecture—both the community of professionals and the buildings they design. You'll find the same depth of commitment among our editorial, graphics, production, sales, and technology teams, and among our freelance journalists, photographers, and illustrators. Their skill earned ARCHITECT a nomination for general excellence earlier this year from the National Magazine Awards. And we're just getting started.

We know we have a lot to live up to, and we're embarking on the AIA relationship in a spirit of both enthusiasm and humility. Robert Ivy and his colleagues at *Architectural Record* set a high bar during their long association with the AIA, and I'm counting on their continued success in the years to come. Architecture is a complex endeavor, and the architecture profession deserves multiple voices.

Over the next few months, many of you will hear from us at Hanley Wood and from our partners at the AIA, as we ask questions, solicit ideas, and strive to refine the editorial voice of ARCHITECT—the magazine, website, newsletters, events, and other offerings. Our goal isn't just to build a bigger, better media brand, but a bigger, better profession, and we'll turn to you time and again for advice on how to accomplish those goals. You, after all, are the experts.

AND NOW FOR SOME FINE PRINT. All AIA members will receive ARCHITECT as a monthly benefit of membership, starting with the January 2011 issue. Members will also have preferred access to three other Hanley Wood publications that are newly affiliated with the AIA: *EcoHome*, *Eco-Structure*, and *Residential Architect*.

All four magazines, and their websites, will host a dedicated AIA section, with content from and about members, the Knowledge Communities, local, state, and regional chapters, and other constituencies. And most every issue of ARCHITECT will offer in-depth coverage of key AIA events and programs, such as the Honor Awards and Gold Medal, economic forecasts, and policy updates.

At the same time, you can expect ARCHITECT to continue producing its outspoken, independent advocacy of architecture—as a community, a business, a set of technologies, a body of intellectual and social concerns, and, of course, as a design discipline.

Have I mentioned that as part of our partnership with the AIA, Hanley Wood is going to manage the AIA Convention and Design Exposition, starting with the 2011 show in New Orleans? We're already cooking up big plans for the event. Details will emerge in the coming months, and I hope you'll join us when the time comes. As they say in the Big Easy, *Laissez les bon temps rouler.*

MIKE MORGAN

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LETTERS

THE ARCHITECT 50, May 2010, page 40
Don't architects like color? Of the 25 pictured in your article, I counted 15 black coats, two gray coats, one gray shirt, three black blouses, one black sweater, one black dress, one black jacket, and one gray dress—no use whatever of the other available options in the visible electromagnetic spectrum. I detected flesh tones in most of the faces, so I assume that the photos were in color.
James A. Gresham, FAIA, Tucson, Ariz.

CARE-MONGERING, April 2010, page 12
There is mounting evidence that the racial slurs you describe regarding Rep. John Lewis most likely did not occur. If the accusations are true, then the Tea Party owes Lewis and the Congressional Black Caucus an apology. If not, then they owe the Tea Party an apology.

Your editorial implies that if one opposes the Health Care Bill, then one's not living up to AIA's Ethical Standards. I hope this implication is coincidental, but the fact that you chose to lead with an unverified incident and then implied a contrast between the Tea Party protesters and Phil Freelon, Julie Eizenberg, and Rural Studio is truly unfortunate.

Tea Party members are concerned about the state of our present economic situation, the massive debt that this administration has piled on to future generations and a class of politician in both parties who think the American taxpayer is an ATM. And that is not racist.
Peter Y. Alberice, Camille Alberice Architects, Asheville, N.C.

TOUGH LOVE, April 2010, page 46
First let me compliment you on all of your editorials. As I pick up ARCHITECT, this is the first page I read. My second thought is on the article by Michael Kubo, Mark Pasnik, and Chris Grimley on Brutalism/Heroic Architecture. I am, at 76, a product of this midcentury modern period. The period produced some great buildings and products incorporating thin shells, space frames, the cantilever and much more. It was a fun time for all. We produced great spaces, very energy efficient, and lots of happy clients. I do believe these products of creativity, now 50 years old, should be saved. The love is not tough at all.
Winslow Elliott Wedin, Architect

THE NEW GUY, May 2010, page 12
Your magazine is one of my favorite sources of usable information. However, you seem to feel you must inject your political views, like the following comment in your dialog page: "I'm surprised that the conservative media hasn't added the story to its propaganda arsenal." Such immature comments are not really something that you need to use. I urge you to control your obvious political bias and use political blogs to vent your ideas and concerns. ARCHITECT is a professional magazine that has a good reputation for worthwhile information. I urge you to keep it that way.
Charles Williamson

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U.S. Supreme Court Shuts Front Doors to Visitors

IN A TRIUMPH for security concerns over architectural symbolism, the U.S. Supreme Court announced that visitors can no longer climb the famous marble steps and enter the building via its iconic front entrance. Ever since the Washington, D.C., building, designed by Cass Gilbert, was completed in 1935, the public has been able to pass under the famous words "Equal Justice Under Law," which are engraved above the court's double bronze doors. Now, visitors are required to use side entrances at each side of the steps.

Announced without warning on May 3 and put into effect a day later, the decision, which the Supreme Court said was based on two independent security studies, has prompted considerable criticism, not least from within the court. Justice Stephen Breyer, known for his interest in architecture, took the unusual step of issuing a memorandum explaining his opposition to the change. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg signed on in support. "To many members of the public, this court's main entrance and front steps are not only a means to, but also a metaphor for, access to the court itself," Breyer wrote.

Cynthia Nikitin, vice president of the New York–based Project for Public Spaces, which has worked with the federal government to make buildings more accessible, denounced the decision in even stronger terms. The court has "slammed the door literally and figuratively on what should be a well-thought-out process," she said.

LAWRENCE HURLEY

New AIA/Hanley Wood Integrated Media Partnership Supports Opportunities That Advance the Architecture Profession

THE AGREEMENT, effective January 1, 2011, creates a portfolio of integrated media channels, editorial, events, and continuing education with a media partner committed to increasing the impact and relevance of the contributions of the AIA and its members. For complete details regarding this integrated media partnership, please visit architectmagazine.com.

APRIL 2010 ARCHITECTURE BILLINGS INDEX

48.4

- ↑ 48.5 commercial
- = 46.8 institutional
- ↑ 48.4 mixed practice
- ↓ 45.8 multifamily

SOURCE: AIA

NEWSWIRE

COMPILED BY EDWARD KEEGAN

TECHNOLOGY REVIEW

Guilt-Free Cement

Producing the ubiquitous material cement generates a lot of carbon dioxide. "Nikolaos Vlasopoulos, chief scientist at London-based startup Novacem, is trying to eliminate those emissions with a cement that absorbs more carbon dioxide than is released during its manufacture," writes David Bradley. "It locks away as much as 100 kilos of the greenhouse gas per ton."

THE NEW YORK OBSERVER

Carrión Moving On

Adolfo Carrión was the first chief of the White House Office of Urban Affairs, created by the Obama administration to coordinate federal policy across agencies. He is moving to HUD as regional director for New York and New Jersey. "The optics ... suggest a step down," writes Eliot Brown. Will the Office of Urban Affairs step down in stature as well?

TECHEYE.NET

CAD Recovery on the Drawing Board

Analysts from Jon Peddie Research note "signs of recovery" in the CAD sector—which was hit harder than other areas of the IT industry during 2008–2009. "JPR believes 200,000 people left the CAD industry as a result of the recession," reports TechEYE.net, but the software market will grow from $5 billion in 2009 to some $7.5 billion in 2014.

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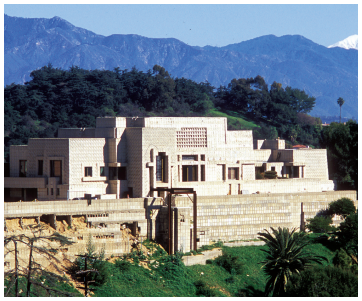

A Steal at Half the Price
Dakota Smith reports that Frank Lloyd Wright's iconic Ennis House in Los Angeles has had its asking price reduced to $7.495 million, less than half the original listing of $15 million in June 2009. It's hard to believe the sellers wouldn't be willing to listen to any reasonable offer at this time—although there's no word on whether the roof leaks.

FAST COMPANY

A Mainstream LED Light Bulb
Philips introduced what it calls the "world's first LED replacement for [the] most common household bulb," reports Kit Eaton. The 12W EnduraLED should be available in the U.S. by year's end. The unit "is a direct swap-in replacement for the most common 60W bulb in use ... making up some 50 percent of the bulb sales market," says Philips. The bulbs will be more expensive than those they replace, but don't expect to replace them often—Philips claims they'll last for 10 years of "'normal' use," writes Eaton.

TEHRAN TIMES (IRAN)

Tehran Going to Venice
The Venice Biennale of Architecture has invited representatives of the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art to attend the Biennale later this year, the *Tehran Times* art desk reports. This will mark the first time Iran will take part in the event.

THEHILL.COM

Architect of the Capitol Confirmed
After much consternation that the next Architect of the Capitol might be a non-architect, the U.S. Senate unanimously confirmed President Barack Obama's nominee for the post, architect Stephen T. Ayers, on May 12. The appointment lasts 10 years and is renewable. Ayers has served as acting architect since February 2007, succeeding Alan M. Hantmann.

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THE NEW YORK TIMES

Transportation Secretary at 300 mph
U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood's ride on an experimental 312-mph maglev train is part of Japan's new strategy to sell the proprietary technology to other countries, Hiroko Tabuchi reports. The Obama administration is keen to introduce high-speed train travel to America, with one caveat. "The only thing that we ask of manufacturers is, come to America, find facilities to build this equipment in America and hire American workers," LaHood says.

THE BOLLINGBROOK SUN

Net-Zero Community
A 35-foot-tall wind turbine has been installed at the site of the new Prairie Ridge Estates in New Lenox, Ill., which the U.S. Green Building Council expects to be the first net-zero community in the country, reports Kim Smith. "We have pushed the boundaries of construction and energy efficiency," says Jim Regan, president of the project's developer, Energy Smart Home Builders.

CONSTRUCTION WEEK ONLINE

Middle East Open for Business
Good news for architects: Oman, Qatar, and Abu Dhabi will increase capital spending by 10 percent in 2010. That's quite a contrast to even the most optimistic forecasts for the United States. "[B]ecause Qatar and Abu Dhabi were focusing on realistic developments ... there was more scope for smaller-name architecture firms to get involved in projects," Orland Crowcroft writes.

ARCHITECTMAGAZINE.COM

Plastics Get Conductive
Mind & Matter blogger Blaine Brownell reports that researchers at Princeton University have developed electricity-conducting plastics that may replace the indium tin oxide that's currently used in transparent metal conductors. Cheaper solar cells and other electronic devices may evolve from these new polymers.

GETTY IMAGES

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AMERICAN EXPRESS OPEN

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BUSINESS

INTERVIEW BY EDWARD KEEGAN
PHOTO BY SCOTT GREENWALT

→BEST PRACTICES

First Things First

ARCHIMANIA LIKES TO START NEW PROJECTS WITH A 'VISIONING CHARRETTE.' BUT THESE SESSIONS AREN'T ABOUT ARCHITECTURE. THEY'RE ABOUT KNOWLEDGE—AND TRUST.

"Visioning charrette" sounds like a design-related process, but Archimania principal **Todd Walker** (left) emphasizes that the meeting with clients is not project-related. What *is* it about? Principal **Barry Alan Yoakum** explains: "We want to get into their business. We want to get in their heads."

ARCHITECTS LIKE TO talk about how they partner with clients, but a true partnership takes time to develop. And time, as any project manager will tell you, is often a precious commodity. Is there a way firms can jump-start the process? Memphis, Tenn.'s Archimania—known as *the* design firm in River City—has been pioneering a new predesign service, dubbed a "visioning charrette," that helps the 15-person practice bond with clients. The result, say principals Todd Walker and Barry Alan Yoakum, is better buildings. "Mania is an intense desire and enthusiasm," Walker says about the name of the firm he opened in 1995. "We still have that for design."

How long is a visioning charrette?

BARRY ALAN YOAKUM: It's a one-day session, usually four to eight hours.

→

How do you start?
YOAKUM: As designers, we're trained to pursue project issues, but we start by pursuing business issues. We do a whiteboard approach with big sticky pads. We tell them, "What we're going to do is going to seem like organized chaos." And it truly is. We purposely sound like we don't know what we're doing because it lowers the threshold. The barriers drop, and we start discovering things.

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How many people are involved?
TODD WALKER: There are two to four people from our side. Barry and I are always there.
YOAKUM: The sweet spot is six to eight for the client. Above that, it's difficult to manage the process.

Are you designing during the day?
WALKER: It's *not* a design charrette. "Visioning" might mean different things on different projects, but we're not walking away with a design in mind.

So what's the process?
WALKER: Barry leads all of our visioning charrettes. He can't do it without a giant Post-it pad. He stands there and writes on them. The clients have a visual connection with this note. It's a collaborative effort of note-taking.

So the vision is not necessarily visual?
YOAKUM: It's almost never visual. The most visual thing is the words and statements on the pads.
WALKER: It took us a while to realize we didn't want to draw in the charrette. Sometimes it's hard not to, but we keep that in check.

How does the discussion develop?
YOAKUM: We let the client manipulate us. We're very open that we may not know what we're doing. And to say that to a client who's paying you large sums of money is a tenuous thing. I tell Todd, "I'm really nervous that I'm about to look really stupid in front of these people." That's the magic, but you don't know until you get into it.
WALKER: The clients like the idea that we're walking into their project with an open mind. We don't have a preconceived notion before we understand their issues, needs, and concerns. Most clients are businesspeople, and they're excited about somebody who wants to understand their business.

How do clients respond?
YOAKUM: We always hear, "This is different from other architects." We dig for the nonobvious drivers. They substantiate the designs we do. It intrigues clients that we try to use both sides of our brain.
WALKER: Clients see that our decision-making process is based on issues. Architects are problem-solvers, in general. This puts us at the front, leading clients through a process. They begin to perceive us as leaders.

It sounds a little bit like group therapy.
WALKER: At every visioning charrette, Barry has used the analogy, "I'm becoming your psychiatrist."
YOAKUM: If you've ever seen somebody walk out of a psychiatrist's office, they look exhausted and drained. Most clients walk out of our sessions that way.

How do you fit the visioning charrette into a contract?
YOAKUM: We start with a one-page agreement that outlines the visioning charrette process and programming. When we get into design, we move to an AIA document. We get compensated for it. We get better fees. People will pay for quality work. □

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→PRACTICE

The Virtues of Midsize

WHEN IT COMES TO MANAGING FIRM GROWTH, HUGGING THE MIDDLE HAS ITS BENEFITS, BOOM OR BUST.

TEXT BY ERNEST BECK

IN 2009, A TRAUMATIC YEAR for U.S. architecture firms, with billings in free fall and extensive layoffs commonplace, New York–based **Spector Group** kept humming along quite nicely. Booked projects were under way at the SUNY College at Old Westbury and at an art-storage facility for Christie's in Red Hook, Brooklyn, while a residence in the $10 million range was going ahead in Kings Point, Long Island. The steady flow of work suggested that this firm had largely avoided the downturn that was roiling the industry. "[Last year] was extra challenging for architecture in general, but we weathered the storm pretty well," says Marc Spector, who runs the 68-person firm with his brother Scott.

If conventional wisdom is correct, this midsize firm is swimming against the tide. In tough economic times, it is thought, small and large firms fare best—the former because they are lean and mean and nimble, the latter because they have deep pockets and a roster of rich clients to tide them over. While none of these assumptions is written in stone, a look at a number of midsize firms like Spector around the country—with staff ranging from 20 to 99 people—indicates that hugging the middle does offer many benefits, whether in boom years or during a bust.

"People have been talking about the death of the midsize firm for many years, but many firms in this sweet spot are doing very well—or just plain well, relatively speaking," says Ray Kogan, president of Arlington, Va.–based Kogan & Co., a management and strategic planning consultancy for the architecture and engineering industries.

To be sure, it isn't all rosy for midsize firms. In fact, many have suffered extensive losses and layoffs as a result of the recession and are struggling to stay afloat. Even at the midsize firms that haven't been hard-hit, architects say they are grappling with the challenges of new business development in a sour economy and the difficulty of maintaining staffing if projects do come along. Competition is fierce for few projects, and price-cutting is eating away at firms' revenue. "This is much more dramatic than anything we saw in the '90s real estate correction," reckons Clark Manus, president-elect of the AIA and CEO of San Francisco–based **Heller Manus Architects**, a midsize firm where the number of projects in hand is off 50 percent.

Yet executives at these practices still firmly embrace the midsize model as one that best suits client needs and provides a sturdy operational and business foundation. They cite several reasons for their firms' ability to survive a recession. These include relatively low operating expenses—compared with those for large, multioffice firms—and the flexibility to respond to changing markets. "We have the resilience and talent to be able to move quickly without a large overhead," says Roger Heerema, CEO of **Wright Heerema Architects**,

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EXECUTIVES AT THESE PRACTICES STILL FIRMLY EMBRACE THE MIDSIZE MODEL AS ONE THAT BEST SUITS CLIENT NEEDS AND PROVIDES A STURDY OPERATIONAL AND BUSINESS FOUNDATION.

→

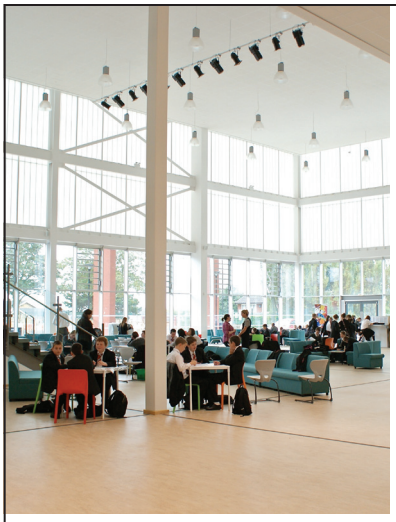
in Chicago. With a current staff of 25 and many corporate clients in the Chicago area, the firm registered a "significant decline" in billings but had only "a few" layoffs during the recession, Heerema says, because it managed to shift many existing clients from ground-up work to interiors.

One advantage of midsize firms over their smaller counterparts, these executives say, is being big enough to operate in a number of selective client markets while keeping expenses low, which has cushioned the blow during tough times. "Having a diversified portfolio means that when something goes into contraction, we are able to redeploy," says Ed Jerdonek, CEO of Louisville, Ky.'s **Luckett & Farley**, an 88-person firm that works on correctional facilities, churches, higher-education buildings, automotive plants, government projects (at every level), and more. In other words, it's easier for the firm to follow the money.

That diversity has also helped **CR Architecture + Design**, in Cincinnati, navigate several business shifts. After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, for example, the 52-person firm's hospitality unit declined while its government group strengthened; in this recession, hospitality was down again, but publicly funded housing projects came back. The strategy was implemented at the firm more than a decade ago because "we knew there would always be ups and downs," says CEO David Arends. CR did cut about 25 percent of its staff, but the firm is tracking "pretty close" to previous net revenue of around $9 million, Arends says.

Even midsize firms that focus on one particular sector, like the healthcare-focused **Taylor**, in Newport Beach, Calif., can cover a broad spectrum of projects. Randy Regier, president of Taylor, says the 58-person firm has always taken small and large jobs as part of its core business, from $5,000 maintenance remodels to $20 million hospital overhauls. "As the market shifted from large to small, gnarly remodel projects in the recession, we were well positioned," he explains.

Kogan, the consultant, suggests that success in coping with a recession has less to do with practice size than with having strong management leadership and long-term strategies for managing finance and marketing—which all firms should have, irrespective of the economy. "Size itself is not the primary determining factor, and that bodes well for medium-size firms," Kogan explains. "The myth that they face special challenges and won't survive—that only small and megasized firms will survive—won't come to pass." □



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Flashback

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→DEVELOPMENT

Hold This Site

ONE OF THE MOST GLARING SYMBOLS OF THE RECESSION IS THE FROZEN CONSTRUCTION SITE. NOW, SOME CITIES AND PRIVATE DEVELOPERS ARE TRYING TO CREATE BEAUTIFUL, PUBLICLY BENEFICIAL INTERIM USES FOR LOTS THAT WOULD OTHERWISE SIT IN LIMBO.

TEXT BY CATHY LANG HO

Lent Space, New York City

Westfield Bradford, Bradford, England

DEAN KAUFMAN; BRITISH PROPERTY FEDERATION

Interboro's Lent Space (above) is a half-acre art park and tree nursery in Lower Manhattan, expected to remain for three years. In Bradford, England, developer Westfield Group announced plans to enliven an empty 10-acre site (above right)—a victim of the recession—but not before vandals had dubbed it "Wastefield."

TODAY'S STALLED DEVELOPMENTS are unlike the blight long suffered by historic industrial boomtowns as a result of job loss and suburbanization. Our cities are experiencing a different kind of vacancy: stagnant sites of halted jumbo projects conceived during the real estate bubble. A far cry from the small razed-house lot (seen on the order of thousands in Detroit, Liverpool, Leipzig, and the like), today's shelved sites often resemble lunar craters, spreading over entire city blocks.

The problem is pervasive. In Seattle, it prompted both *The Seattle Times* and a local real estate blog, Seattle Bubble, to create interactive maps where readers could post stalled developments in their neighborhoods; as of April, readers had identified 76 lots in the Seattle area. On the other coast, WNYC's popular radio host Brian Lehrer posted an interactive "Halted Development" map online, in conjunction with an interview he conducted in October 2009 with New York State Assemblyman Hakeem Jeffries. Jeffries is spearheading a statewide effort to work with developers to refinance and convert their stalled projects to affordable housing as an alternative to foreclosure or mothballing.

The British real-estate publication *Property Week* has gone the furthest in terms of advocacy, launching the Site Life campaign to work with the real-estate industry and the public sector "to bring some life back into these sites through temporary uses … until development can start." Partnering with two major developers, Land Securities Group and Westfield Group, as well as the British Property Federation, the campaign was endorsed by London Mayor Boris Johnson and city councils across the country.

Some of the campaign's most notable successes are Land Securities' quirky re-creation of a Jurassic forest in London—replete with 24 life-sized animatronic dinosaurs—which attracted 3,000 ticket-buying visitors

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in one week, and Westfield's commitment to convert a 10-acre site in Bradford into a park. (The latter created a PR nightmare for the company just weeks before the April announcement of the park plan, when vandals pasted posters on the site proclaiming "Wastefield.")

The trend is just now gaining traction in the United States. Lent Space in New York City, designed by Brooklyn-based Interboro, is one of the few examples of a temporary project realized with the cooperation of the site's owner—in this case, Trinity Real Estate. Interboro principal Georgeen Theodore notes, "This project came out of the generosity of Trinity, but we wonder if there's a way to provide incentives for developers to deal with this inventory of unused public space, looking perhaps at the model of Privately Owned Public Space (POPS), New York's 1961 zoning ordinance that gave developers FAR bonuses for providing public amenities."

Proxy: Lots K and L, San Francisco

Pollinator Garden, San Francisco

Douglas Burnham's Proxy project in San Francisco (above) will bring a temporary mixed-use intervention to two vacant city lots. In the same city, Rebar is building a pollinator garden (above right) on a stalled construction site; the developer, Turnberry Lansing, is paying for materials.

The temporary use of privately or city-owned space is still feared, in part because the memory of an earlier generation of interventionists—for example, Liz Christy's Green Guerrillas, who furtively lobbed "seed bombs" over fences in 1970s New York—remains fresh. When lot owners, including the city, later tried to wrest control of their properties, the communities that labored to improve them and thus add value to their neighborhoods were loathe to give them up.

"The term I use is the 'People's Park' paradox," says Michael Yarne of the San Francisco Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development, referring to the Berkeley park that political activists established on university-owned land in 1969, sparking a series of violent confrontations with the police and National Guard. "The risk is, if a private developer successfully creates a memorable space, he also creates a local constituency that loves it, and might be sowing the seeds for future opposition. He becomes the bad guy who wants to tear down a butterfly park."

To encourage developers to take a chance, San Francisco is drafting what it calls a Green Development Agreement, which gives developers iron-clad protection for their developments, ensuring them the right to go forward with their already-approved projects, no matter how long it takes. In return, the city asks simply for a use that benefits the public. The entitlement process in San Francisco is especially cumbersome, requiring developers to renew on a one- to three-year basis, and projects are always at risk as entitlements are always subject to modification. In theory, the savings from not having to hire lawyers and architects to keep entitlements current could be applied to the cost of commissioning a temporary use.

Seattle, too, is developing legislation to provide flexibility to property owners of stalled constructions, "allowing for interim uses while owners wait for a turn in the market," according to Bryan Stevens of Seattle's Department of Planning and Development. "We are exploring the possibility of mobile vendors, retail, and space for public art, as well as standards for landscape and lighting." The legislation was finalized in the spring and will be passed to the city council for approval this summer. Concurrently, the Seattle Design Commission launched a competition, Holding Patterns, to solicit interim uses.

With projects predicated on narrow windows of opportunity, timing is everything. Here are three good ideas that, fortunately, found the right time.

LENT SPACE, BY INTERBORO,
CANAL STREET, NEW YORK CITY

Opened in fall 2009, Lent Space is the fortunate offspring of a longstanding relationship between the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC) and Trinity Real Estate, a major property owner. Trinity's initial plan was simply to install sculpture on its recently cleared half-acre site, and it asked the LMCC to advise. The LMCC's curator, Adam Kleinman, knew of Interboro's winning scheme for a 2002 Dead Malls competition, so together, they developed the idea of a temporary art park.

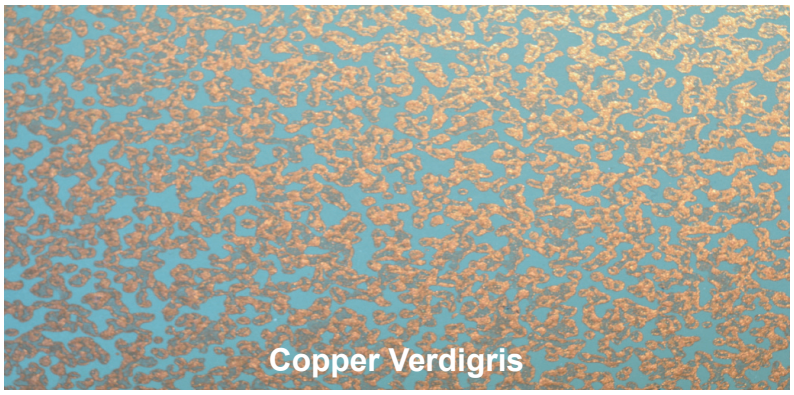
Responding to the developer's requirements to have the site closable at night, the designers installed along one length a decidedly parklike wooden fence comprising 8-foot-wide panels that pivot open, making a lively invitation to passersby to cross the space. The rotating panels have built-in benches on one side and face an open space where Kleinman is programming changing exhibitions of large sculpture.

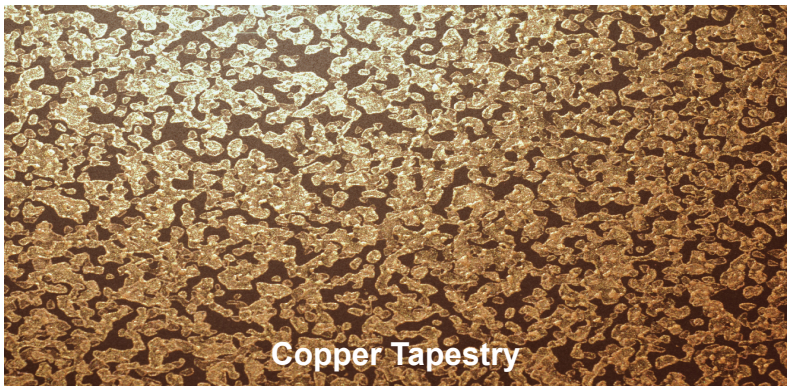
The fleetingness of the project—projected to remain for three years—also drove the decision to create a tree nursery on site. "There are so few open spaces in the area, so we immediately wanted to have trees. But we didn't want to plant anything if they were going to be torn out in a few years," explains principal Daniel D'Oca. Working with the parks department and the New York Restoration Project, the designers devised movable planter boxes that grow trees that will wind up on the surrounding streets when Lent Space is over.

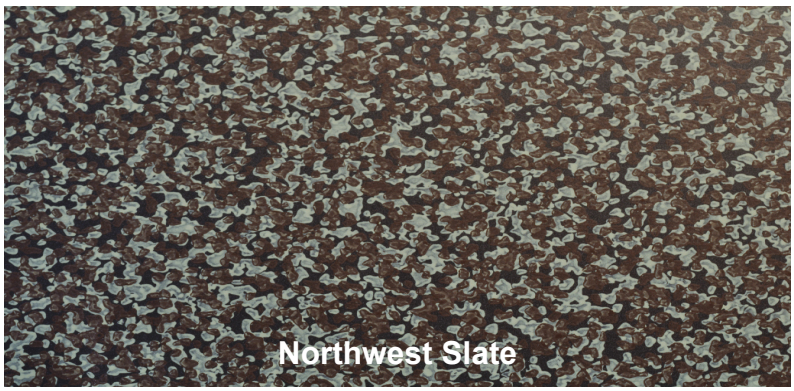
POLLINATOR GARDEN, 45 LANSING STREET, AND **TREE NURSERY,** 399 FREMONT STREET, **BY REBAR**, SAN FRANCISCO

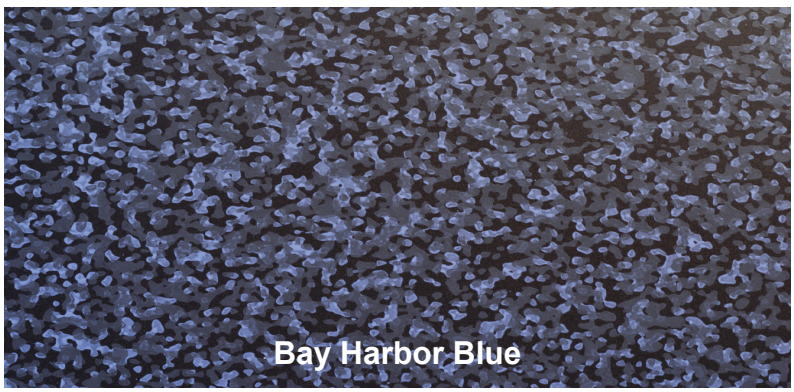
Last summer, the *San Francisco Chronicle* urban design writer John King dispatched a series of articles about the city's stagnant construction sites, including at least a dozen in the South of Market (SOMA) district alone, challenging the city and developers to "breathe life

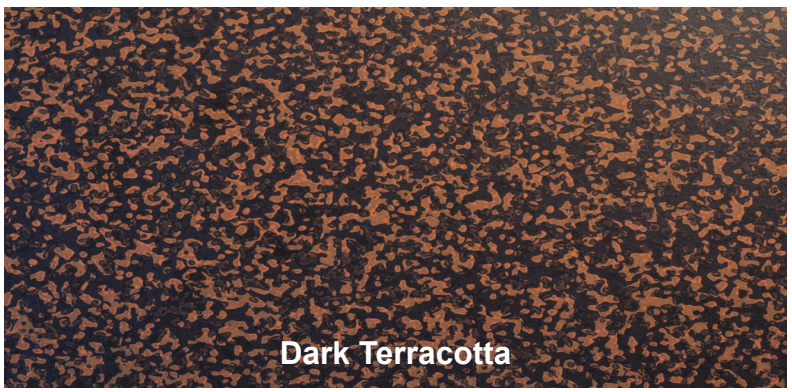
ENVELOPE A+D; REBAR











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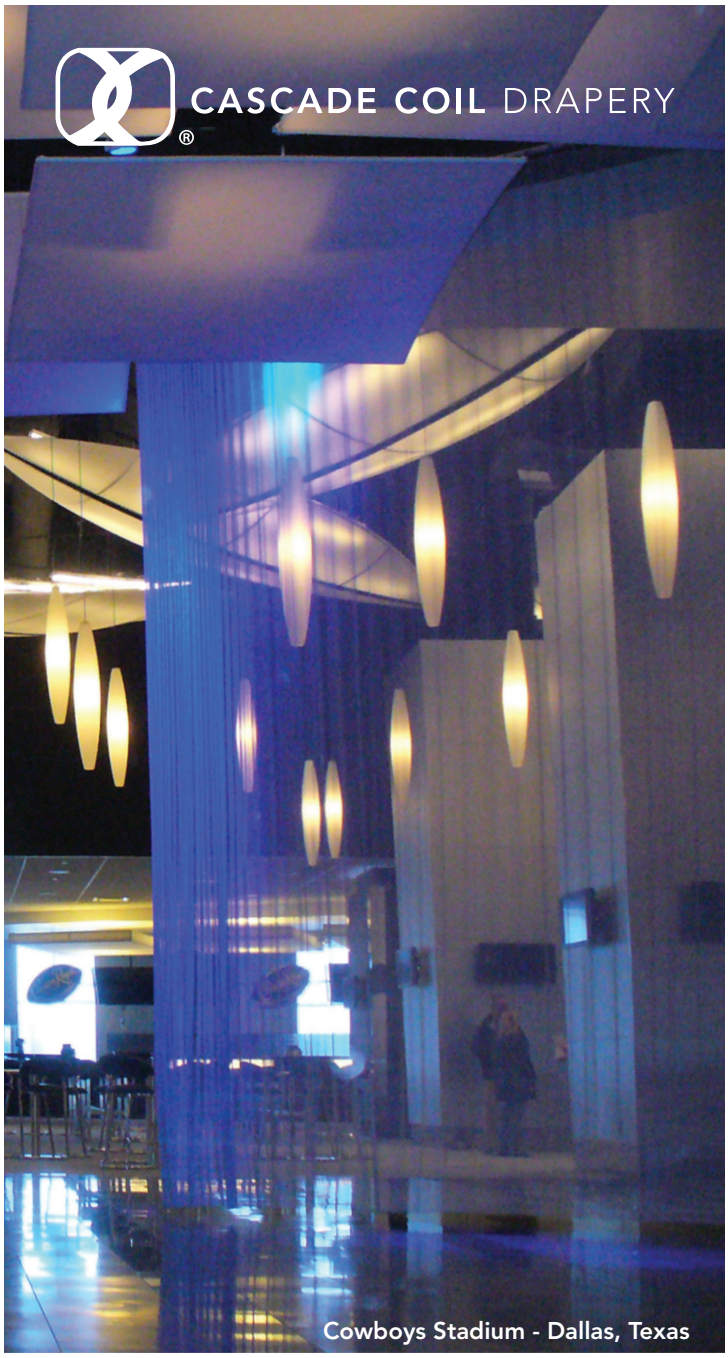
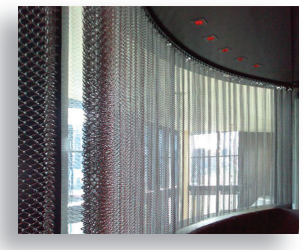


Woven Wire Fabric



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into these voids." The newspaper also invited local design teams to produce conceptual schemes for specific vacant lots, inspiring action on the part of at least two property owners: Turnberry Lansing, proprietor of 45 Lansing Street, and Fifield, which owns 399 Fremont Street. Both enlisted Rebar, a participant in the *Chronicle*'s ideas exercise, to enhance their sites in the short term.

At 45 Lansing, Rebar is creating a pollinator garden, a habitat for pollinating species such as honey bees, butterflies, beetles, and hummingbirds. "Urbanization has made it rough for pollinating animals and insects, so we thought we'd give them a food source," explains principal Matthew Passmore. The site will be dotted with large circular planters, formed by straw wattles that are easy to install and sit lightly on the land, and packed with native wildflowers. The developer is paying for materials, but volunteers through the Pollinator Partnership are donating the labor.

At 399 Fremont, the designers take a page from Lent Space, installing a tree nursery in partnership with the Friends of the Urban Forest, which supplies street trees for San Francisco. Though still in its design phase (expected to be completed by fall), it will feature planter boxes for hundreds of trees that may be easily transported to another site when the time comes.

PROXY: LOTS K AND L, BY ENVELOPE A+D,
OCTAVIA BOULEVARD, SAN FRANCISCO

Architect Douglas Burnham, of Bay Area–firm Envelope A+D, stepped sideways into the role of developer to create an interim design for two lots in San Francisco. The city recently took control of several vacant lots along Octavia Boulevard and put them up to developer bid. Burnham assembled his own development team to bid on two adjacent lots, for which he had already designed residential buildings that won first place in the 2005 San Francisco Prize competition. His bid won, but then the housing market crashed.

In one of his meetings with the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development last year, Burnham was asked to consider a temporary use for his or any of the other Octavia lots. "Our first thought was, 'That's intriguing; they're asking us for free work,'" recalls Burnham. "But it got us hypothesizing about potential programs, like an outdoor cinema, pop-up shops, food stands, gardens, urban living rooms with movable furniture, and so on."

He proposed a mixed-use intervention on two larger lots, around the corner from his own and closer to a commercial area, which the Mayor's Office readily endorsed and ushered through zoning approval. Within a wrapper mostly of perforated mesh, filled in with tenting and scaffolding, Burnham proposes several discrete places for modified containers, open seating, courtyards, and more. "We want a mix of uses, but we don't want it to look like a junkyard," says Burnham, explaining their desire for an intervention that "really occupies the space, a volumetric ghosting of what a real building would be."

He's already lined up a pizzeria, a beer garden, and an ice cream stand, and hopes to create a temporary gallery space, "probably made out of panelized components that can be clipped together," he says. With a three-year lease for one lot and four years for the other, Burnham must pay the city monthly what it was previously earning when the sites were parking lots; vendors are bearing the bulk of the cost of their own build-outs up front, in exchange for a low monthly rent.

"In many ways, the timeline is perfect, because three to four years is about the amount of time it takes for people to get tired of something," quips Burnham. The project will be rolled out in phases, starting this summer. □

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→LOCAL MARKET

Puerto Rico

TEXT BY MARGOT CARMICHAEL LESTER AND CLAIRE PARKER

1

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3

4

PUERTO RICO'S STRATEGIC POSITION in the Caribbean Sea made it the target of many European nations beginning in the late 1500s, until the 1898 Treaty of Paris ended the Spanish-American War and made the island a U.S. territory. Over the years, Puerto Rico's various occupiers blended with indigenous inhabitants to create a pastiche of continental and tropical cultures, as evidenced by the isle's people and its architecture.

"You can find an immense catalog of styles—from 16th century Spanish architecture with lots of European vernacular to modern international designs," says Mario Dumont Gaztambide, a designer at Carlos E. Betancourt Llambías Arquitectos, in Santurce. "The mix of cultures and history is what Puerto Rico is all about."

While hospitality projects move forward, other commercial development and home building have stalled. "Construction [has] been greatly affected by the economic climate," says Nataniel Fúster Felix, principal of San Juan's Fúster + Partners. "Many offices have seen their staff greatly reduced. I hope the island can reposition itself as a center for investment and design."

That's the plan, certainly. Hoping to leverage the strength of the pharmaceutical, life sciences, and medical-device manufacturing sectors, the territory's government is beginning to push the island as a hub for research and development, too. "We're focusing on innovation and turning ourselves into a knowledge-based economy," says Javier Vázquez Morales, executive director of the Puerto Rico Industrial Development Co. Proof of that commitment is the 80-acre Science City under way on the University of Puerto Rico's Río Piedras campus, in San Juan. The project includes lab and office space, housing, and a convention center and will be built out over the next two decades. Morales adds, "We want to attract R&D facilities and scientists to do more science and discovery." □

1. Mayaguez Swimming Facilities
ARCHITECT: Fúster + Partners, San Juan. **COMPLETION:** 2010. **BRIEF:** After hosting part of this summer's Central American and Caribbean Games, the $28 million center—which features passive solar technologies—will become a public facility.

2. Sala Sinfónica Pablo Casals
ARCHITECT: Rodolfo Fernandez Ramirez Architects, San Juan. **COMPLETION:** 2009. **BRIEF:** $34 million, 1,300-seat home of the Puerto Rico Symphony.

3. Science City Master Plan
ARCHITECTS: Toro Ferrer Arquitectos and archUD, San Juan; Field Operations, New York. **COMPLETION:** 2007. **BRIEF:** 80-acre development on the University of Puerto Rico's Río Piedras campus will be built over 20 years and will include R&D, office, hospitality, housing, and civic spaces.

4. Sheraton Puerto Rico Hotel & Casino
ARCHITECT: RTKL Associates, Chicago. **COMPLETION:** 2009. **BRIEF:** $210 million, 490,000-s.f. building is seeking to be the first LEED-certified hotel in the Caribbean.

POPULATION/EMPLOYMENT
2009 population: 3.9 million; current unemployment: 16%.

OFFICE MARKET
In the first quarter of 2010, San Juan's 8.7-million-s.f. office market had 9.3% vacancy; asking rates: $19.50/s.f.–$37.50/s.f.

RESIDENTIAL MARKET
Current median home sale price: $230,000.

MARKET STRENGTHS
- Strong manufacturing and professional services sector
- Highly skilled, bilingual workforce
- Caribbean location

MARKET CONCERNS
- Government bureaucracy
- High unemployment
- Lagging economy

FORECAST
"As an optimist, I imagine things will pick up," says José Javier Toro, principal of Toro Ferrer Arquitectos, in San Juan. "Periods of scarcity can sometimes encourage creativity."

1–4: FÚSTER + PARTNERS; CARL ROSENBER/ACENTECH; FIELD OPERATIONS; LUIS A. MUÑOZ

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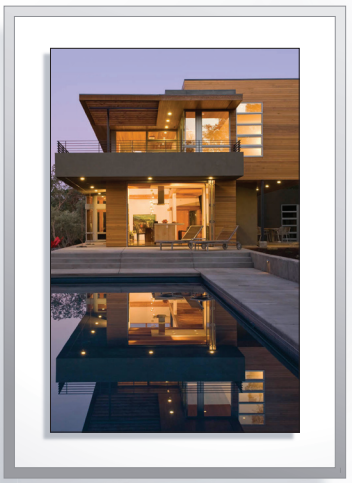

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Right Picture: Citation Award Winner, Hudson-Panos House / Swatt Architects

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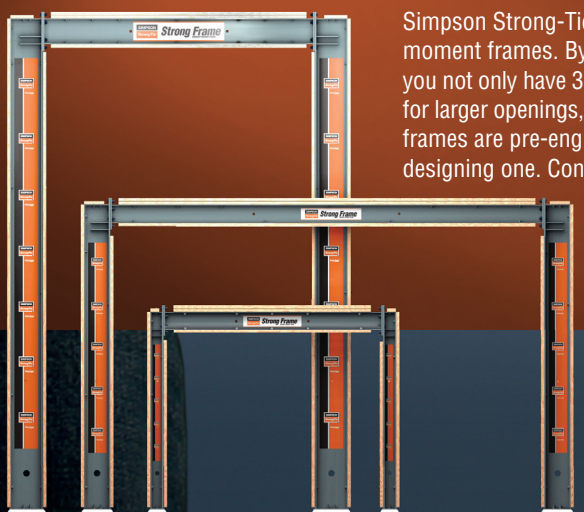

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TECHNOLOGY

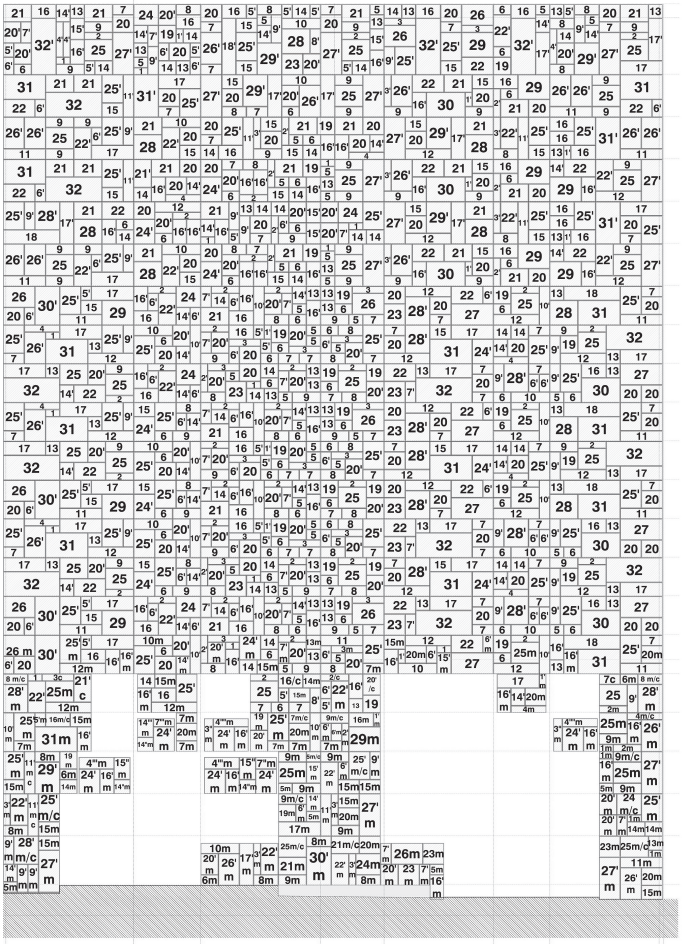
→DETAIL

Condominium Curtain Wall

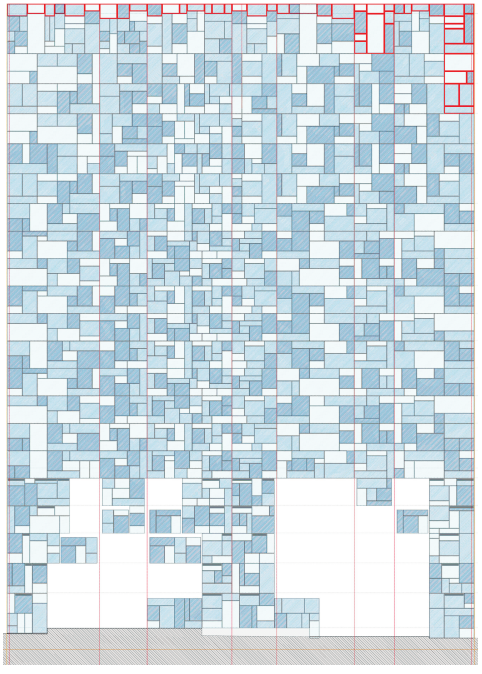
Project: 100 11th Avenue
Architect: Ateliers Jean Nouvel, with Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners
Location: New York City

TEXT BY GIDEON FINK SHAPIRO

Elevation With Window Types



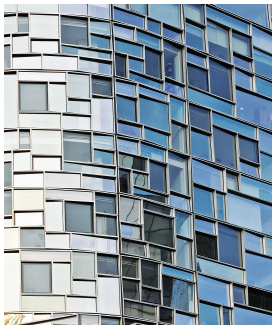
Elevation With Glass Types

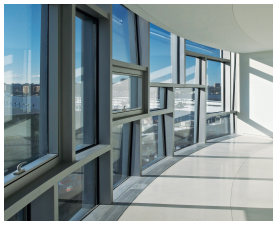


Window Breakdown (Partial)

WINDOW NUMBER	1	1'	2	2'	3	3'	4	4'	5	5'	6	6'	7	7'	8
WINDOW LAYOUT	4'-0" / 2'-0" / 1	2'-0" / 4'-0" / 1'	8'-0" / 2'-0" / 2	2'-0" / 8'-0" / 2'	9'-0" / 2'-0" / 3	2'-0" / 9'-0" / 3'	10'-0" / 2'-0" / 4	2'-0" / 10'-0" / 4'	4'-0" / 3'-0" / 5	3'-0" / 4'-0" / 5'	5'-0" / 3'-0" / 6	3'-0" / 5'-0" / 6'	6'-0" / 3'-0" / 7	3'-0" / 6'-0" / 7'	7'-0" / 3'-0" / 8
WINDOW DIMENSIONS (Height x Width)	2' x 4'	4' x 2'	2' x 8'	8' x 2'	2' x 9'	9' x 2'	2' x 10'	10' x 2'	3' x 4'	4' x 3'	3' x 5'	5' x 3'	3' x 6'	6' x 3'	3' x 7'
DIRECTION OF ROTATION															
ANGLE OF ROTATION	2°	5°	5°	3°	2°	4°	2°	5°	4°	4°	2°	5°	4°	3°	2°
MATERIALITY	M2	M3	M2	M4	M4	M1	M3	M4	M1	M1	M2	M4	M4	M4	M1

ATELIERS JEAN NOUVEL





The tilting windows of 100 11th Avenue form an intricate matrix that frames views from inside (above) and scatters reflections on the outside (top). The exteriors of the steel "megapanels" that hold the windows are finished with angled aluminum extrusions (above middle), heightening the visual intricacy.

THE MODERN IDEA of a residence as a "machine for viewing" dates back at least to Le Corbusier, whose 1930 Beistegui penthouse along the Champs-Elysées had a periscope through which the client could look out over Paris. Eighty years later, French architect Jean Nouvel is using the term "vision machine" to describe the new high-rise condominium that his firm, in collaboration with executive architect Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners (BBB), has completed in New York City.

Just what kind of vision does 100 11th Avenue create? Sited on the western edge of Manhattan's Chelsea district, the 21-story building provides suitably grand panoramas of the Hudson River. Yet its wraparound south and west façades are no ordinary glass curtain wall. To heighten the visual experience both from inside and outside, Ateliers Jean Nouvel designed a system of floor-to-ceiling "megapanels" containing different configurations of variously sized glass rectangles.

Each megapanel spans the full length of a room so that joint hardware doesn't mar the view. Detailed by Front and fabricated by China Architectural Engineering, the unitized modules—the largest of which measures 12 feet by 37 feet—are mounted directly onto the structure. A stainless steel framework holds in place the puzzle of 32 window sizes while carving the vista into frames. (A slope in the ceiling shows where the slab, which is 9 inches thick at the building's core, grows to 18 inches to encase perimeter band beams, which allow the ceiling and floor to extend column-free to the edge.)

Further upping the intricacy, every window is canted between 2 degrees and 5 degrees up, down, left, or right. Angled aluminum extrusions clad the frame exteriors, helping ensure that the nonaligned windows remain watertight. While the triple-layer glass is colorless from inside, three shades of low-E coating create an external patchwork of reflected hues. Nevertheless, a discerning eye perceives the grid layout of the megapanels among these jumbled lenses, as well as the occasional repetition of glazing patterns.

The semi-enclosed glass-and-metal screen that follows the street wall along the bottom five levels permits balconies and extra rooms for the lower apartments, plus light wells and a restaurant space on the ground floor. The screen and the curtain wall end at the building's northwest and southeast corners, leaving cliffs of dull black brick to face the heart of Manhattan. This contextual material echoes the anonymous warehouses and tenements of Chelsea, but with a twist. The cut-out windows' seemingly random proportions, heights, and tilt angles hint at the hyperarticulation lurking just around the corner. Sliced out of bedroom walls, these apertures offer more-elusive city views.

"The fundamental design ideas find their way into the most minute details," notes John Beyer, partner at BBB. Behind its veneer of chance, 100 11th Avenue's unitized façade is about ordered complexity. It becomes a vision machine not by virtue of its internal workings, but by reorienting its viewers to the site and the city. □

ATELIERS JEAN NOUVEL

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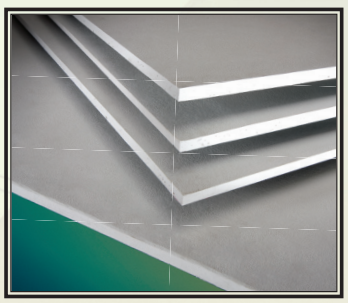

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→ECO

Performalism

A BUDDING DESIGN MOVEMENT ASKS: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR A BUILDING TO PERFORM?

TEXT BY LANCE HOSEY
ILLUSTRATION BY PETER ARKLE

A NEW BUZZWORD has entered the architectural lexicon. "Performalism" was the title of a 2008 Tel Aviv Museum of Art exhibit curated by Yasha Grobman and Eran Neuman, whose book *Performalism: Between Form, Function and Performance in Contemporary Architecture* will be out next year. At a 2009 Harvard conference, University of Brighton professor Susannah Hagan presented a paper by the same name. And in January, at New York's Center for Architecture, Pritzker Architecture Prize winner Thom Mayne gave a talk called—you guessed it.

Is this a coincidence, or does the sudden proliferation of the term suggest a budding trend, even a design movement in the making, as the suffix "-ism" implies? Either way, what does it mean for architecture to perform? According to David Leatherbarrow, in his introduction to Branko Kolarevic and Ali Malkawi's *Performative Architecture: Beyond Instrumentality* (2005), the concept is ambiguous: "Is the performance envisaged for the building like that of a machine or engine ... or, is it closer to what might be seen on a theatrical stage or heard in a concert hall?"

I'd say both. An engine is a tool for efficiency, while stage performance is an act of display, and their combination suggests a kind of practical spectacle or utilitarian showmanship. The externalization of function is quite different from modern architecture's orthodoxy. For Louis Sullivan, "form follows function" meant embodying internal use: An office building's workspaces determine the structural dimensions and window sizes, as well as "the artistic development of the exterior," as he put it. Form follows program.

For Mayne, however, performalism means disengaging the exterior from the interior, freeing up the skin to adapt to climate conditions while the building behind remains utterly pragmatic, economically and functionally. For example, the floating south façade of Morphosis' San Francisco Federal Building is less an envelope or an enclosure than it is a mask or a veil. Similarly, Hagan mentioned London's ecoLogicStudio, which creates "responsive skins" highly attuned to environmental cues. Form follows environment.

While typical green standards emphasize marginal improvements (e.g., better glazing), rethinking the very concept of architecture can have greater benefits. According to Mayne, the shading from the diaphanous skin of the Federal Building eliminated the need for most of the mechanical system, since the skin itself is a kind of air conditioner. Such performance deserves a standing ovation. □

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TEXT BY KIMBERLY R. GRIFFIN

→PRINTERS & PLOTTERS

See It in 2D

THE LATEST LARGE-FORMAT PRINTERS HELP FIRMS GET THE MOST BANG FOR THE BUCK.

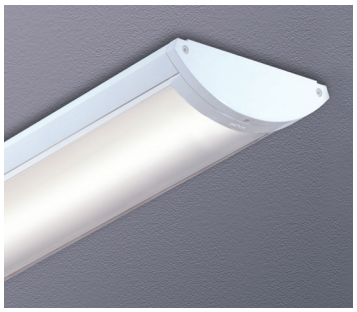
WHEN SHOPPING FOR A NEW PRINTER, spending money is inevitable. But there are ways to reduce the costs of ownership. HP's Instant Print Utility function, now in version 3.1, provides a print preview of a job, with scaling options, by right-clicking the file. "You'll see exactly what the print job is going to look like before you ever hit 'print,'" saving on cost per print, says Eric DuPaul, DesignJet business development manager at HP Graphics Solutions Business. Reed Hecht, professional imaging product manager for Epson America, emphasizes low maintenance and built-in networking, as well as software that monitors how much your firm is spending on printing: "Tracking software like Epson's myepsonprinter.com can play an integral role in an architect's design workflow."

Canon U.S.A. iPF8300, iPF6350, and iPF6300
A 12-pigment ink set helps Canon's three latest printers increase achievable colors by about 20 percent over previous, CMYK-based models, and can reproduce more than 90 percent of Pantone colors. The 44-inch iPF8300 (pictured), as well as the 24-inch iPF6350 and iPF6300, features 2,560 nozzles per color at 2400x1200 resolution, and all three are Energy Star compliant. The 8300 and 6350 offer an 80GB hard drive for faster spooling of large files. iPF8300: $5,995. iPF6350: $3,995. iPF6300: $3,695. • *usa.canon.com* • Circle 100

Xerox Wide Format 6604 and 6605
Xerox's 6604 and 6605 are capable of simultaneous copying, scanning, and printing. Both models can scan in color and in sizes from E to A0, at 600x600 dpi, to make electronic files and print duplicates. The 6604 (shown) can produce up to four D- or A1-sized images per minute; the 6605 is capable of five per minute. An optional second roll of paper increases print capacity. Xerox's FreeFlow Accxes print server allows users to preview scans while they print, copy, and scan other documents. Starting at $19,300. • *xerox.com* • Circle 101

Epson Stylus Pro 7700 and 9700
The Epson Stylus Pro 7700 (24-inch printer) and 9700 (44-inch printer, shown) both feature 720 nozzles per color with MicroPiezo TFP print heads that work twice as quickly as the previous generation of Epson printers. They have two black inks, one for matte paper and another for glossy. The 7700 and 9700 can produce plots at speeds ranging from 20 seconds at 360 dpi for a C-sized plot to 3 minutes, 9 seconds at 1440 dpi for a D-sized plot. Stylus Pro 7700: $2,995. Stylus Pro 9700: $4,995. • *proimaging.epson.com* • Circle 102

HP DesignJet T Series
HP's 44-inch T1200 takes on the task of printing both CAD and GIS documents, producing line drawings at 28 seconds per page and color images at 445 square feet per hour. Options for the 44-inch T770 (shown) include a front-loading top roll, built-in networking, and memory upgrades. The 24-inch T620 series prints line drawings at 35 seconds per page and color images at up to 364 square feet per hour. All three are Energy Star qualified. T1200: $7,000. T770: $4,670. T620: $2,450. • *hp.com/designjet* • Circle 103



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→PRODUCTS

NeoCon Preview

Nucleus is a new ergonomic task chair offering from the **HON Co**. The seat is crafted out of suspension material stretched over a contoured frame and topped with foam, and the back is clad in ilira-strech M4—a four-way-stretch mesh—and is available in three neutral tones. Lumbar support requires no manual adjustment. The task chair is available with or without arms, as is a coordinating guest chair (which stacks four high and can be outfitted with either casters or glides). Designed by Marcus Koepke, Nucleus is SCS-certified as Indoor Advantage Gold, and the seat can be upholstered in any of the company's fabric options. • *hon.com* • Circle 104

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The **Truman** collection from **Harter by Izzy+** includes a bench, lounge, and occasional table. The bench (shown) has a die-cast aluminum frame with 20% post-consumer content, a recyclable molded plywood seat base, and a manufactured urethane cushion. It comes in 24", 48", or 72" lengths and myriad upholstery options. • *izzyplus.com* • Circle 105

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Epingle Stripe, the new Paul Smith–designed textile from **Maharam**, is suitable for seating upholstery applications. The fourth collaboration between the designer and the company, this fabric plays with warp, weft, and color to create a vivid and deeply textured surface that is available in five colorways. The material is made from 100% cotton, and comes in a single 50" width. • *maharam.com* • Circle 106

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- Have the knowledge of the environmental concerns regarding Toxicity, VOC's and Painting and how these can be best addressed
- Understand the Life Cycle Assessment and the system analysis parameters
- Recognize the 4 D's of Wall Design
- Understand how water management and durability improve longevity of cladding

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COURSE TITLE
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- How to compare and contrast the two distinct rainscreen techniques:

  1) drained and back-ventilated rainscreens (D/B-V)

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- Understand several responsibilities of the designer when utilizing rainscreen systems

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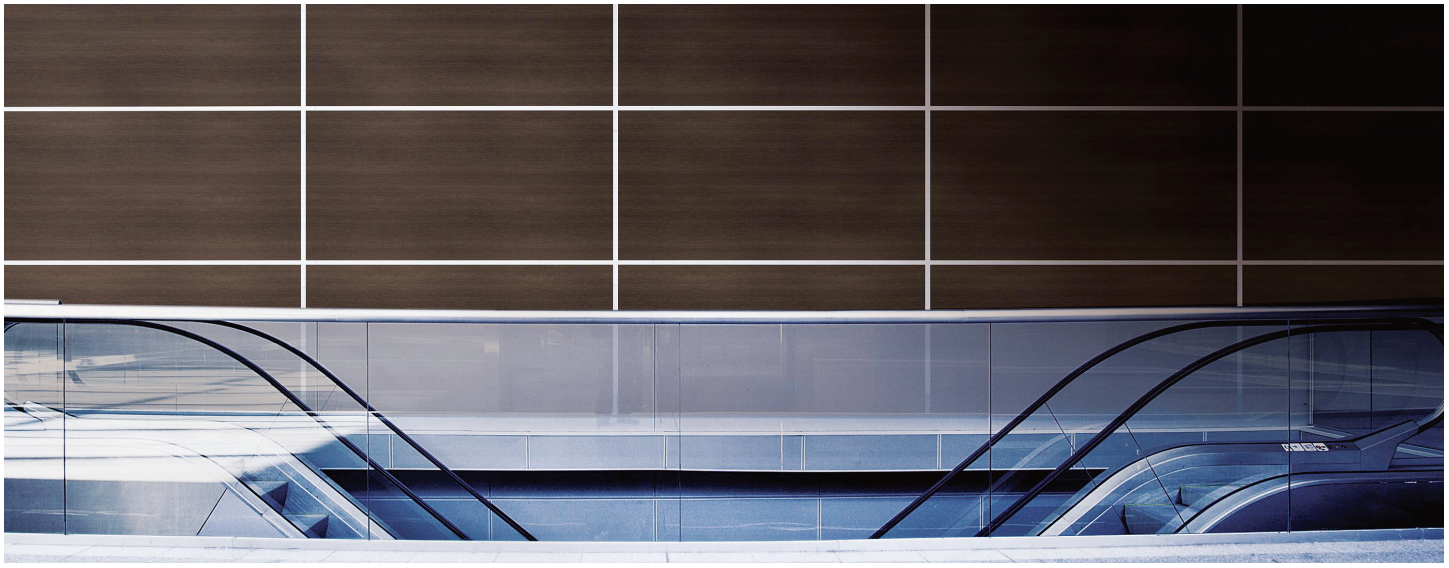

A new **Wall Panel System** is the result of a collaboration between **Chemetal** and **Treefrog Veneer**. The system features three reveal options—Open, Captured, and Shadowline—in satin, black, gold, and bronze finishes, all of which can be used with panels that are 5/16"- or 3/8"-thick and up to 4' by 10' in size. The systems can be used with any of Chemetal's 100-plus metal designs (all of which have a Class A fire rating), or Treefrog's collection of more than 50 prefinished wood-veneer panels (which are Class B fire rated, but can be coated to meet Class A standards). • *chemetalco.com* • Circle 107

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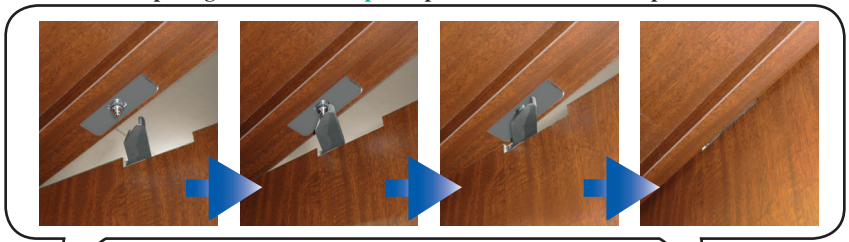

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Getting into the business of space making, **3form** has found a new use for its Varia Ecoresin product: prefabricated snap-together tiles. The new system, called **Ditto**, has cross-shaped pieces that can be combined to create partitions and wall features, and can be cold-bent to form curved canopies. The tiles have 40% pre-consumer recycled content and can be installed in custom configurations to allow more or less transparency. • *3-form.com* • Circle 108

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A new addition to an existing line of education furniture, the **Interchange Wing Desk** by **Smith System** features a triangular high-pressure laminate desktop. Designed to move from individual to collaborative work environments in the classroom, the desks can be used singly or arranged into square tables, clusters, or long tables. The desktop is available in 10 quick-ship colors, with bumper edges in 18 colors, and the legs are available in a scuff-resistant combination of powdercoat and chrome plate. An option for a built-in book box is also available. • *smithsystem.com* • Circle 109

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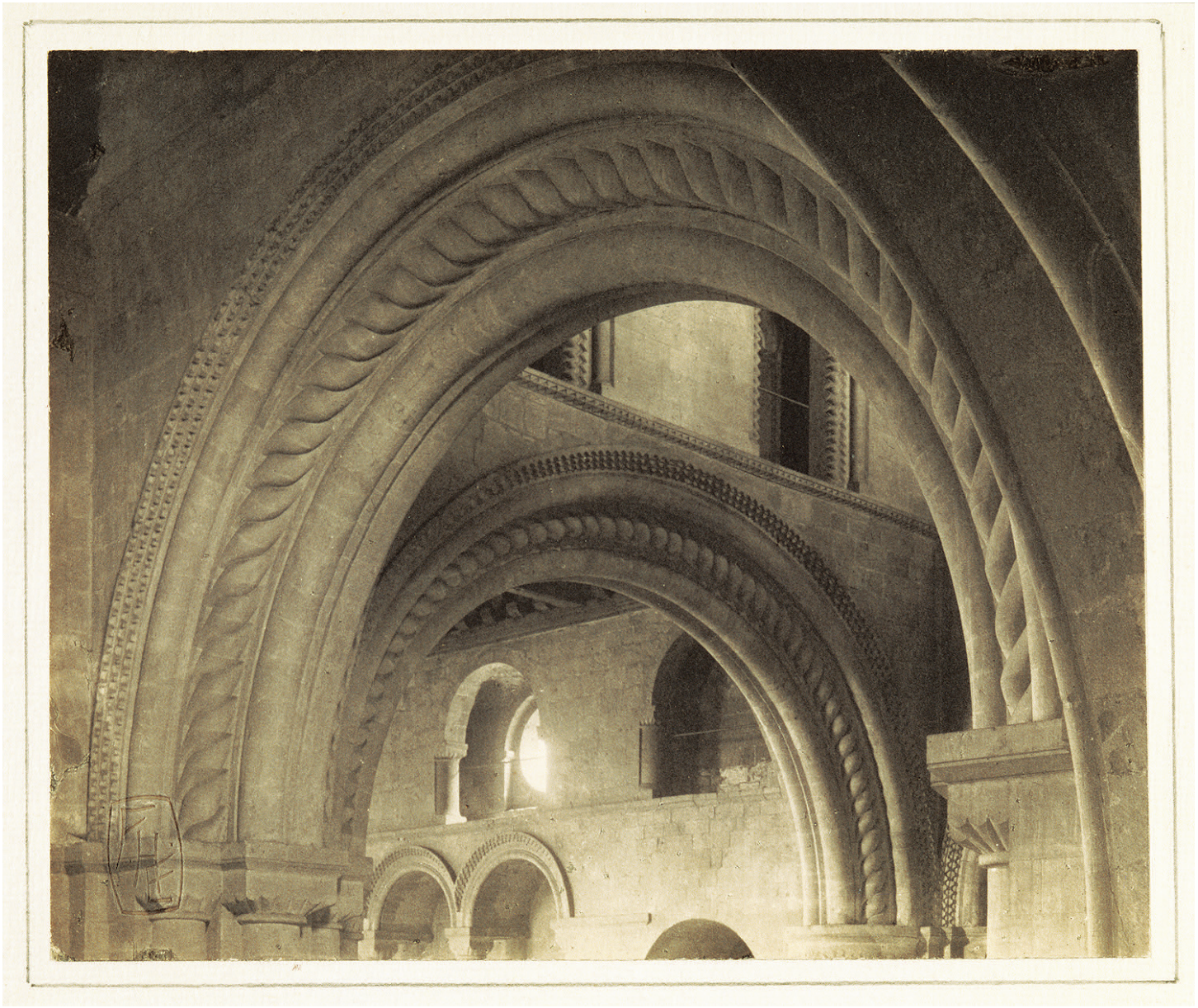
CULTURE



→BOOK

If your summer plans don't include a trip to Los Angeles to see the J. Paul Getty Museum's **A Record of Emotion: The Photographs of Frederick H. Evans**, never fear. The accompanying monograph, by Getty associate curator Anne M. Lyden, beautifully captures the spirit and substance of the pioneering architectural photographer. The reproductions of Evans' moody images of medieval British churches, such as Southwell Cathedral (above), make the monograph well worth the price. Added value comes from Lyden's investigation of Evans' lesser-known work: views of the English countryside, photo-micrographs of natural specimens, and portraits of Aubrey Beardsley, George Bernard Shaw, and other contemporaries. $50; Getty Publications

→FILM

Combining a static 35mm camera with the subtle audio work of sound designer Yashuhiro Morinaga, Chris Chong Chan Fui's **Block B** (right)—the first artwork at Washington, D.C.'s Hirshhorn Museum by a Malaysian artist—compresses the world of Kuala Lumpur's expat Indian families into a 20-minute meditation in two parts. The snippets of dialogue might be fiction, but the monolithic Block B is very real. Through Aug. 1. *hirshhorn.si.edu*

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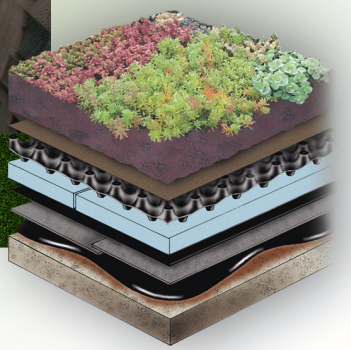

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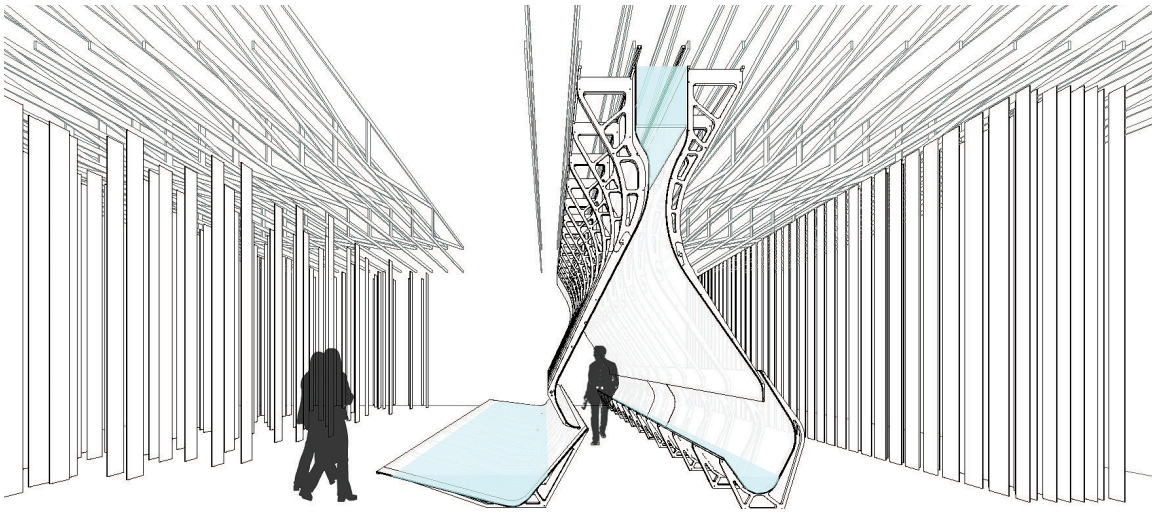
→EXHIBIT

Taking cues from the summer architecture installations of London's Serpentine Gallery and New York's MoMA/P.S. 1, the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art has launched "Architecture + Art," a yearly series of site-specific projects by Arizona architects. First up: Atherton|Keener's **90 Days Over 100°** (below), in which sunlight melts a block of ice over the course of each day. Coppertone not included. Through Sept. 19. *smoca.org*



PREVIOUS PAGE: THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM, LOS ANGELES © MRS. JANET M. STENNER; LEFT: STILL FROM CHRIS CHONG CHAN FUI'S "BLOCK B," 2008. IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ARTIST; ABOVE: © ATHERTON|KEENER

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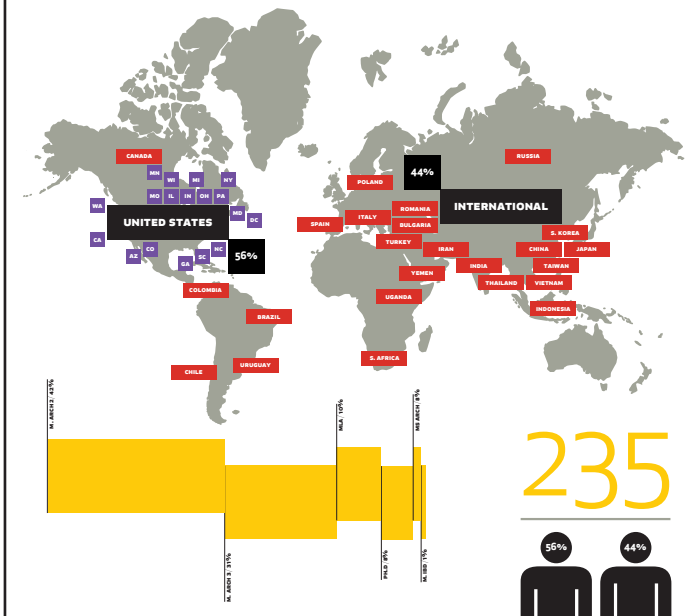
EXHIBIT

Architect Peter Marino (left), known for his high-end residential, retail, and hospitality designs, is also an avid acquirer of art: ceramics and porcelain, paintings and photography, rare books, and sculpture. For the first time, his collection of 30 French and Italian bronze sculptures, dating from 1550 through 1750, is on public display. **Beauty and Power: Renaissance and Baroque Bronzes from the Peter Marino Collection**, at London's Wallace Collection, includes works by Baccio Bandinelli and Corneille van Clève. Through July 25. *wallacecollection.org*



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TOP: MANOLO YLLERA, COURTESY PETER MARINO; BOTTOM: STILL FROM EVAN MATHER'S *A NECESSARY RUIN*

FILM

Evan Mather packs a lot of history into the 30-minute documentary **A Necessary Ruin**, his tribute to Baton Rouge, La.'s Union Tank Car Dome (1958–2007). The dome (above)—whose design team included R. Buckminster Fuller and lighting specialist Abe Feder—was the world's largest free-span structure when it was built; it was razed one year before reaching historic status eligibility. Find screening dates and a trailer at *handcraftedfilms.com*.

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→Q&A

David Brussat

THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL'S LONGTIME ARCHITECTURE CRITIC, A CHAMPION OF TRADITIONAL DESIGN, ISN'T AFRAID TO ASSAIL MODERNIST ORTHODOXY.

INTERVIEW BY EDWARD KEEGAN
PHOTO BY NOAH KALINA

ARCHITECTURE CRITICS at daily U.S. newspapers are rare enough, but those who champion traditional design are rarer still. In fact, there may be only one: David Brussat, a member of *The Providence Journal*'s editorial board. Brussat grew up in the Washington, D.C., area and began his journalism career as a dictationist for The Associated Press (AP) in the late 1970s—just as computers were starting to make the position irrelevant. "I was able to do very little work and much reading," Brussat recalls. While devouring classical literature on the AP's dime, he looked around for editorial positions. After several stops across the South, he arrived at *The Providence Journal* in 1984 and became the Rhode Island newspaper's architecture critic six years later. In 2002, Classical America, which merged that year with the Institute for Classical Architecture, presented him with an Arthur Ross Award. He writes his column every Thursday and still pens editorials, usually on foreign policy.

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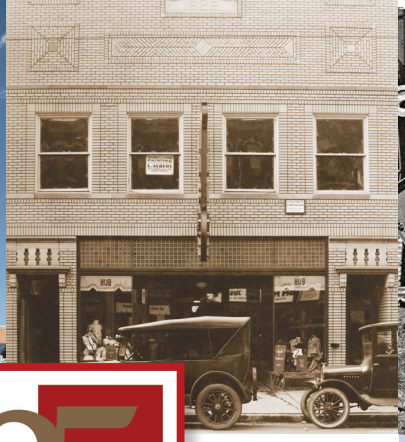

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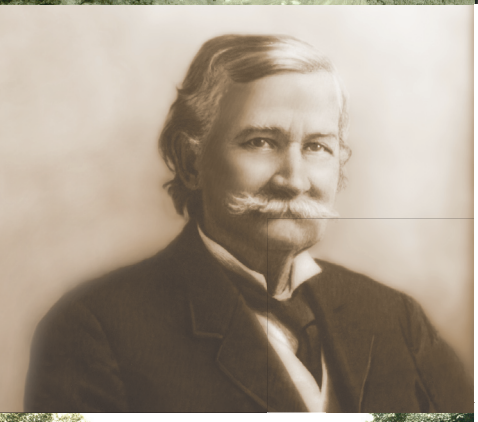

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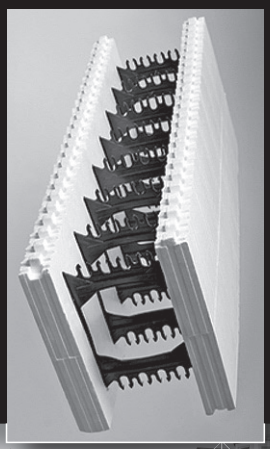

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"JOY IN MODERN ARCHITECTURE IS A LEARNED RESPONSE. JOY IN TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE IS INSTINCTIVE."

→

Do you have any formal education in architecture?
I've taken one course in architecture—a drawing course sponsored by the Institute of Classical Architecture & Classical America about four years ago.

How did you get interested in architecture?
Growing up in Washington had something to do with it. I used to go down to the Mall a lot. I was impressed by the architecture. My dad was an urban planner. He was one of [prominent New York City developer] Bill Zeckendorf's fair-haired boys and was the project manager for Society Hill in Philadelphia.

Why Providence?
Providence is one of the smaller cities to have an architecture critic. It's a unique environment for thinking about architecture, with an unusual built patrimony. Providence was able to avoid the urban renewal ravages of the 1950s and 1960s because it was very poor. It's probably the city with the greatest intact set of traditional neighborhoods and downtown in the whole country. It has an Ivy League school and what some would say is the top design school in the country, RISD [the Rhode Island School of Design].

Why are you an advocate for traditional architecture?
Traditional architecture has a resonance with people. There should be first dibs for traditional architecture in the public realm, since that's what the public likes. People in power ought not to thumb their noses

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at the public's taste. The scorn of the public is a feather in the cap of modern architects. I don't think that's the proper attitude for a democracy.

Do you write mostly about local architecture?
I spent a lot of time writing about development issues in Providence in the 1990s. Downtown was undergoing a renaissance of traditional architecture. In about 2000, the city took a profoundly negative [stance] towards traditional architecture. I railed against that. My focus now is more towards national and international issues, trying to push the classical revival.

How do you define your role?
The role of an architecture critic is to educate the public on matters architectural. A point of view is required. Some architectural critics find traditional architecture very enchanting, as long as it was built a hundred years ago. But they believe it's illegitimate to build a traditional building in the 21st century.

Are there others writing with a similar perspective?
There's no one else in daily newspaper journalism. [National Civic Art Society co-founder] Catesby Leigh writes for a number of publications, but I don't know of any other regular writers on architecture who are not themselves traditional architects.

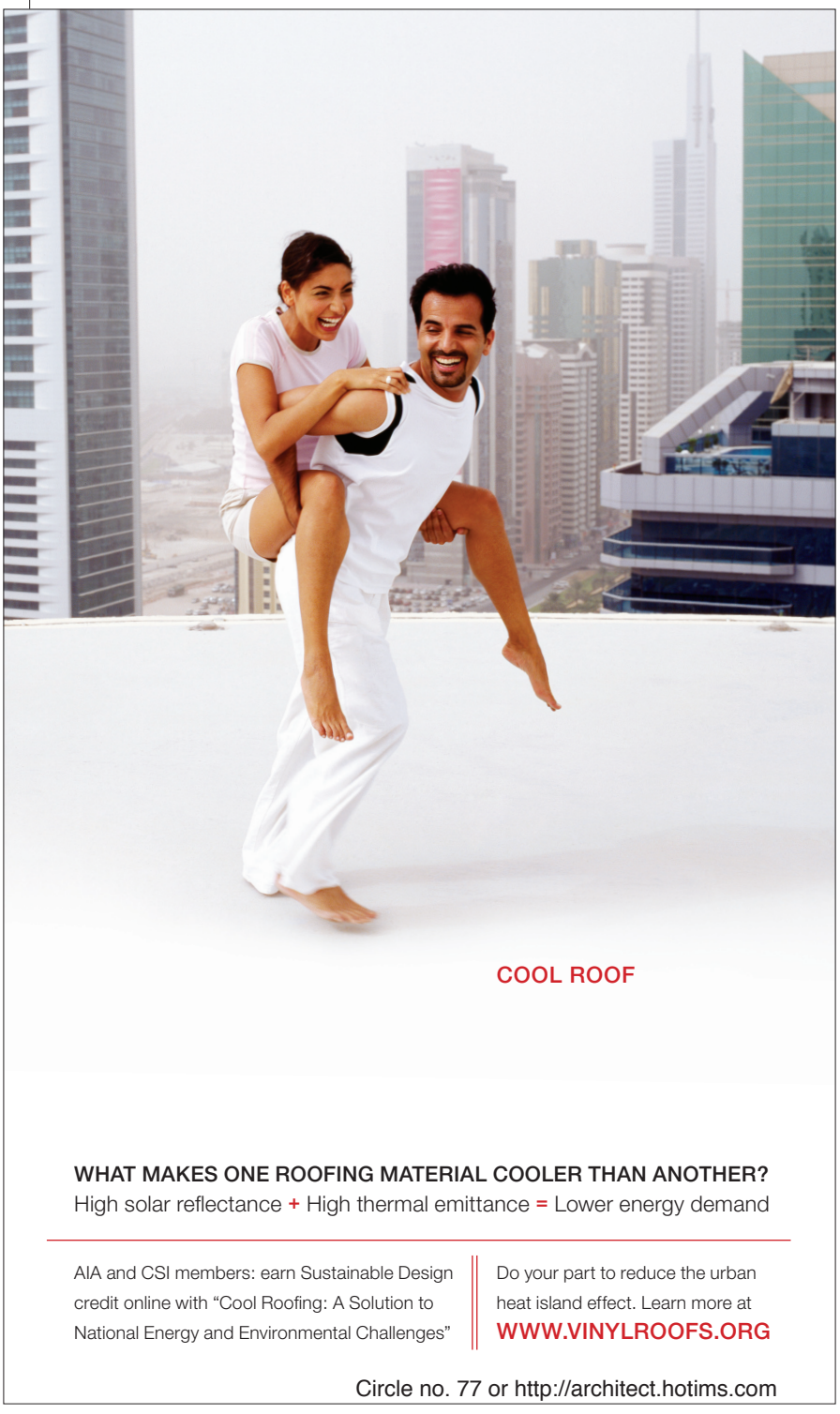
What effect do you have in Providence?
Every once in a while, I'm contacted by a RISD student. I've spoken to any number of architecture students who felt under assault because of their opinions. I'm glad that through my writing I can give such people something to hold on to. But as far as the faculty is concerned, I'm the devil incarnate. If I make some of the professionals around here uncomfortable, that's fine. A lot of them should be uncomfortable because of the things they've created.

How does it help to be on the paper's editorial board?
Getting an architectural opinion into an editorial as opposed to a column is a real coup. It's the institutional opinion of the newspaper, rather than the opinion of columnist David Brussat. That gives it much more power.

Do you have any affinity for modern architecture?
There are modern buildings that I like, but joy in modern architecture is a learned response. Joy in traditional architecture is instinctive.

How do you feel about your fellow critics?
Most critics do a good job of reporting on architecture. I wouldn't challenge Nicolai Ouroussoff on his facts; I would challenge his interpretation of those facts. Herbert Muschamp used to go off on these wonderful, imaginative rolls that made his writing quite fascinating. He was great to read.

Any final thoughts on modern vs. traditional?
One problem with architecture is how it's bound up with genius. A good architect is always considered a genius. One difference between Modernism and traditional design is that a modernist needs to be a genius in order to do anything good. Modernists have abandoned the principles of the past. Traditional architects don't need to be geniuses in order to produce beauty because they can copy the past. It can be done with genius, but it doesn't require genius in order to be done acceptably well. There aren't that many geniuses out there. □



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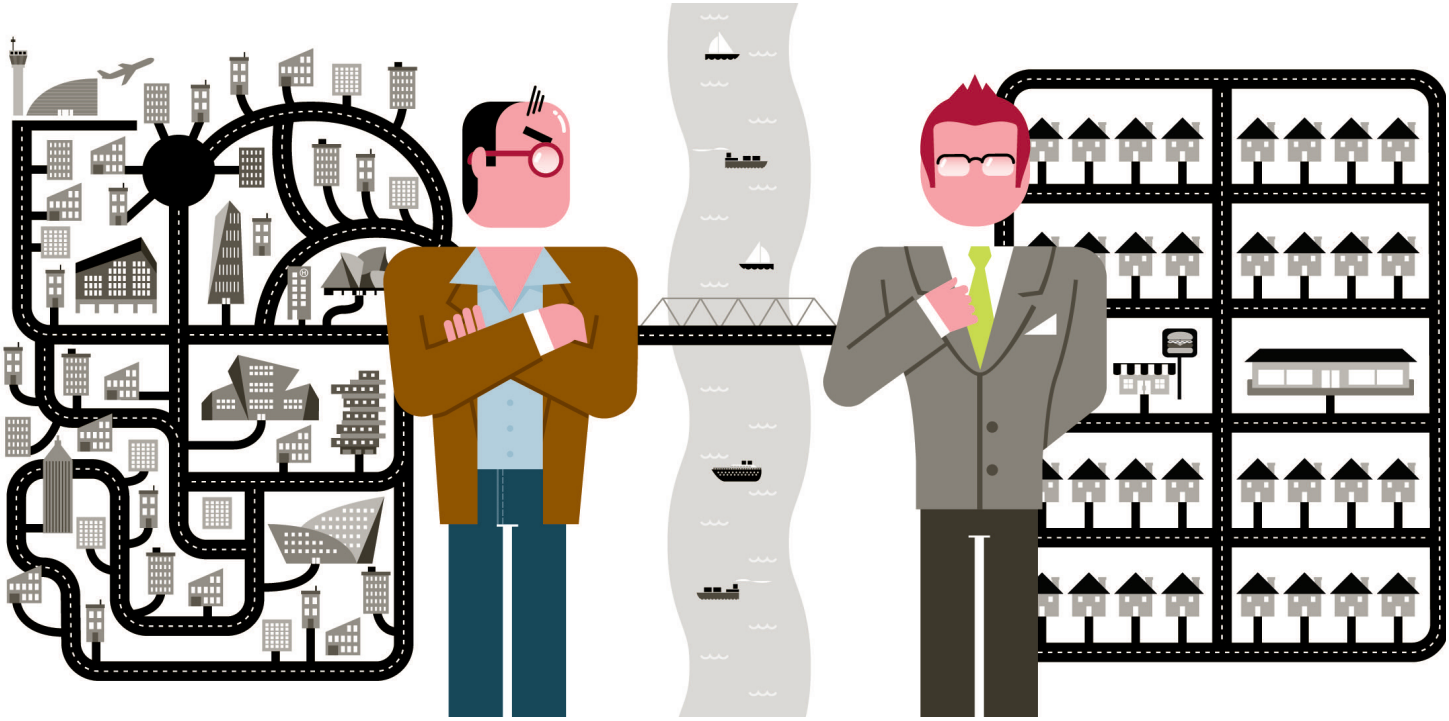

TEXT BY JEFF SPECK
ILLUSTRATION BY HEADCASE DESIGN

Formerly director of design at the National Endowment for the Arts, **Jeff Speck** leads his own city planning practice in Washington, D.C. He is co-author of *Suburban Nation* (2000) and the just-published *Smart Growth Manual*.

IF ONE SCANS THE architecture magazines of the early 20th century, it is common to find in the letters section vitriolic disputes about the design questions of the time. It was with those sparring words in mind that I welcomed the invitation to rebut Robert Bruegmann's critique of *The Smart Growth Manual* ("How Smart Is Smart Growth?," February 2010), my most recent collaboration with Andrés Duany. I was also excited about the prospect of creating a brief taxonomy of the anti–New Urbanism species and trying to get to the bottom of their disdain for our work. For the sake of brevity, I will call these groups the Libs, the Mods, and the Saints.

I'll begin with the Libs, or libertarians, because that is the direction from which Bruegmann lobs his review. Libs feel compelled to remind us of "the difficulty [of] sorting out the exact extent of human impact on a pattern of global weather that has fluctuated widely over the millennia with or without human intervention," as Bruegmann does in his book *Sprawl* (2005). They likewise discount the role that highway building, redlining, and racial politics played in the growth of suburbia. For them, sprawl exists because Americans want it, and any attempt to improve transit or to enforce walkability is the first step down the slippery slope to death panels.

To this group, which is quite skilled at mustering facts in support of its utterly counterintuitive claims, the only rebuttal is to revert to common sense and a single question: How, by any possible stretch of the imagination, could it be considered efficient, healthy, or even acceptable to have spent the better part of a society's wealth constructing a national landscape in which most citizens require a one-ton, poison-belching prosthetic device to satisfy their daily needs? (Slap forehead and continue …)

The Mods include anyone who cannot brook the traditional building styles found in many New Urbanist developments. While most New Urbanists feel that buildings have an obligation to communicate the spirit of their place, most Mods feel that buildings must communicate the spirit of their time, and that revivalism is a lie. Never mind that some of their favorite buildings are Greek revival (Roman) or Roman revival (Renaissance); we must not repeat this once-acceptable act of bringing tradition into the present.

While the charter of the Congress for the New Urbanism is careful to remove style from the debate,

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LIKE MANY NEW URBANISTS, I LIVE IN A MODERNIST HOUSE, BUT I DON'T LET MY PERSONAL STYLE PREFERENCE DOOM MY CLIENTS—WHO ARE TRYING TO SELL SMART GROWTH TO A STYLISTICALLY CONSERVATIVE MARKET. NOR DO I THINK MY PREFERENCE IS IMPORTANT.

→

many New Urban communities, like the Kentlands in Maryland, attempt to embody and evolve the architectural traditions of their region. Duany is quick to remind us how, while most of us were trained in architecture school to serve *clients* and *patrons* with sophisticated designs, nobody prepared us for the vast collection of *customers* that we would take on when we tried to reform the middle-class market. These customers include the review boards who must approve our projects if they are to be built—and, as we noted in our book *Suburban Nation* (2000), "it is hard enough to convince suburbanites to accept mixed uses, varied income housing, and public transit without throwing flat roofs and corrugated metal siding into the equation."

Like many New Urbanists, I live in a Modernist house, but I don't let my personal style preference doom my clients—who are trying to sell smart growth to a stylistically conservative market. Nor do I think my preference is important.

Finally, there are the Saints, who are the hardest group to rebut because they are essentially right. The Saints, who wouldn't dirty their hands with conventional development practice, point to those New Urban communities that have failed to fully achieve the goals of the movement and call them "better-looking sprawl."

In response, it's worth noting that many projects that claim to be New Urbanism or Smart Growth are not, which is one reason why we wrote *The Smart Growth Manual*. But even if we look only at our own work, we have to admit that some of it falls short—again for the simple reason that we are a movement of reform. Reform means that you start with the processes and products that are currently in place and try to make them better. For this reason, each New Urban project must be judged not only against an ideal, but also against the built environment that surrounds it.

To drive to Kentlands from historic Georgetown is a disappointment, but to drive there from sprawling Tyson's Corner is a revelation. That experience, and the hard slog that led to it, is what keeps us in the fight. □

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HOMING IN ON THE IDEA OF ARCHITECTURE AS A STRATEGIC BUSINESS DECISION.

TEXT BY JOHN GENDALL
PHOTO BY SIOUX NESI

Return on Design is the brainchild of BLT Architects' director of marketing, **Heidi Thiede**, who wanted to move the firm into the social-networking world. "I was looking for a way to increase awareness of who we are," she says, and "to find out what's important to the community at large." Managing principal **Michael Prifti** hopes the site will expand possibilities for the profession.

READERS OF THIS MAGAZINE will probably unanimously agree: design adds value. But just what that value is—and whether it can be quantified at all—is a more nuanced proposition. For clients hewing to a bottom line, taking on architectural projects may seem daunting, even irresponsible. Thus, for architects, it becomes imperative to make a compelling case about the value of design not just as an aesthetic proposition, but as a way to address a client's business objectives.

Return on Design hopes to tackle the question of architecture's business value. Created and given a soft launch in March by the Philadelphia firm BLT Architects, the social networking site asks members to post projects whose design demonstrates a certain value beyond the aesthetic. Members can then discuss the merits of each case study. To stimulate an initial conversation, the site has a prestocked Hall of Fame, which includes New York's Fifth Avenue Apple store, designed by Bohlin Cywinski Jackson—surely among the best-known, and most-visited, retail spaces in the nation. "We designed [the site] to be malleable. It's going to move where its participants want to take it," explains Michael Prifti, BLT's managing principal.

Prifti has been wrangling with the issue of architecture's value throughout his career. "Philadelphia is very much a value-driven market," he says. "The city has near-Manhattan building costs, but developers get Philadelphia rent." Thus, in a process familiar to most architects, he and his fellow principals at BLT have to go into projects making the case for the firm's services. "This has been an interesting discussion for us for a long time, since we straddle different markets," Prifti notes. In this way, Return on Design is very much borne from years of experience.

To encourage participation, at press time, BLT planned on a series of targeted pushes to its clients and to fellow architecture firms. "There's always something to learn," says Prifti. "We are just hoping to support the conversation." □

LINKS

dlib.indiana.edu
"Charles Cushman's Journey Through the American Landscape, 1938–1969," an essay by Indiana University history professor Eric Sandweiss, is part of the school's online archive of Cushman's 14,000-plus Kodachrome color slides. Sandweiss discusses how the amateur photographer captured a nation undergoing tremendous changes—economic, social, urban, and otherwise—over the course of three decades. "Any single place in the mid-twentieth-century American landscape can be found documented in greater detail elsewhere," he writes. "But in no other single place that I know of does the sheer range of those places—across space, across time, across the intermeshed functional elements of city, suburb, and countryside—receive a fuller treatment than it does in these pictures." • *bit.ly/bRpkhT*

recoletacemetery.com
Buenos Aires' Recoleta Cemetery is a must-see for any visitor to the Argentinian capital. The city-within-a-city is the final resting place for many of the country's most famous people and—like the better-known Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris—features remarkable mausoleum designs. This blog, written and photographed by Robert Wright, an American guidebook researcher and writer, and Argentinian cultural journalist Marcelo Metayer, explores the cemetery and the histories of many notable names. Although Wright stopped adding new posts in March because of other commitments, he plans to keep the blog online as long as possible because of the paucity of information about Recoleta available in English.

translab.burundi.sk
Artists love to investigate the creative aspects of new technologies. This archive of computer-generated and -aided art from the 1950s to the late 1970s shows what 19 people—some working in collaboration—accomplished with punch cards, programming languages such as FORTRAN, and other computer tools available at the time. The archive was compiled by Translab, a cross-disciplinary research project based in Slovakia. • *bit.ly/cmTkH2*

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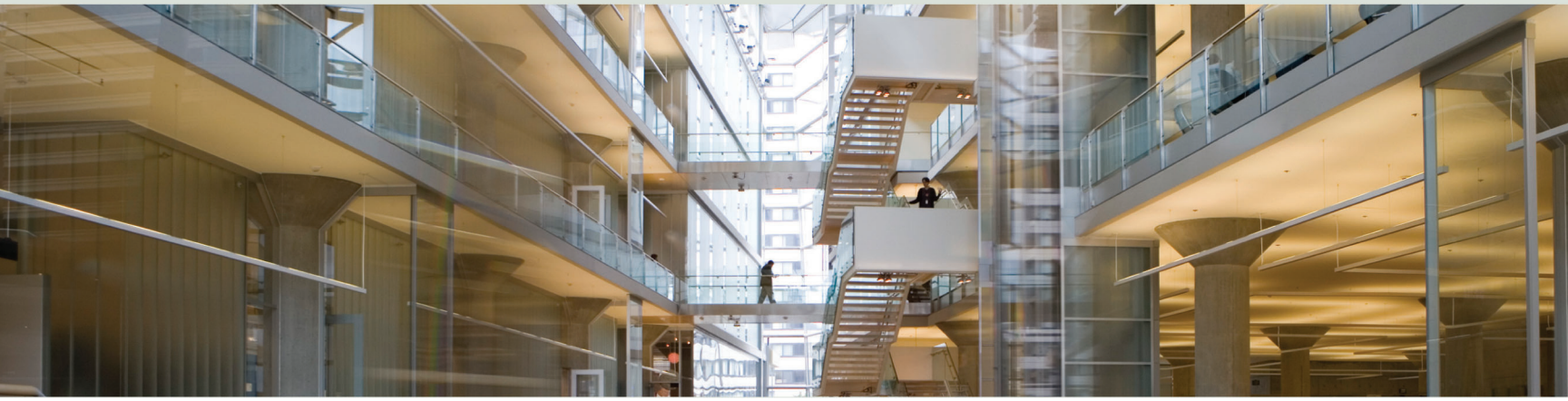

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Anna Dietzsch and **Joaquim Rondon** of Davis Brody Bond Aedas in the Vila Madalena neighborhood of São Paulo, where they're designing a linear park in collaboration with the city government and a nonprofit group.

EMERGING MARKET: BRAZIL

AS ONE OF THE MUCH-TOUTED BRIC ECONOMIES (ALONG WITH RUSSIA, INDIA, AND CHINA), BRAZIL IS POISED FOR MAJOR GROWTH OVER THE NEXT DECADE. THE COUNTRY WILL CAPTURE GLOBAL ATTENTION WHEN IT HOSTS THE WORLD CUP IN 2014 AND THE OLYMPICS IN 2016. NOT SURPRISINGLY, U.S. ARCHITECTS ARE ALSO TAKING NOTICE. BUT THE BRAZILIAN MARKET IS FAR FROM TERRA INCOGNITA. HERE, ARCHITECTS WHO WORK IN BRAZIL HELP MAP OUT THE LANDSCAPE.

TEXT BY AMANDA KOLSON HURLEY
PHOTOS BY IAN ALLEN

ONE EVENING IN MARCH, on the eighth floor of a mid-rise office building in the well-heeled Itaim Bibi neighborhood of São Paulo, architects Anna Dietzsch and Joaquim Rondon tried to explain to a visiting reporter the essential differences between working in the United States and in Brazil.

"Brazil is very bureaucratic," said Dietzsch, a director at Davis Brody Bond Aedas. Born and raised in Brazil, Dietzsch studied at Harvard's Graduate School of Design and now works primarily in New York, traveling to her hometown of São Paulo—and the firm's satellite office, Davis Brody Bond Brasil (DBB Brasil)—every month or so.

Getting a business up and running in Brazil can take much longer than in the United States, Dietzsch said, and World Bank research confirms this: The average time required is 120 days (compared with six in the U.S.), according to the report *Doing Business 2010*, which ranks Brazil 129th out of 183 countries for ease of doing business. Even after following all the required procedures (16 of them, according to the World Bank), there can be other, minor headaches to contend with. For instance, when DBB Brasil's office opened two and a half years ago, it was an ordeal just to get bottled water delivered without multiple people signing off, Dietzsch remembered with a laugh.

Then there's the larger matter of how buildings actually get built. Shop drawings and trade schedules are uncommon in Brazil, if not unheard of, Dietzsch said. She recalled one of the first projects she worked on in her home country; at one meeting, she was the sole woman in a room with more than 15 men and struggled to find the correct Portuguese term for "shop drawings," before realizing there probably wasn't one. So architects must rely on off-the-shelf solutions, or customize their own, added Rondon, the managing director of DBB Brasil.

But as Dietzsch and Rondon flipped through project portfolios, it was easy to see why they could shrug off those red-tape battles. DBB Brasil, now a 10-person office, completed in 2008 a city-sponsored "eco park" in São Paulo, Victor Civita Plaza, which unspools a long diagonal of wood decking across, and 3 feet above, a contaminated post-industrial site that it seeks to remediate. The firm is currently at work on another urban intervention, Green Stream Linear Park, which intends to unify disparate spaces in a bohemian neighborhood—alleys, public steps, and a stream among them—into an integrated park, friendly to pedestrians and bicyclists. (The project is a collaboration between DBB Brasil, a local nonprofit, and the City of São Paulo's environment department.)

Also on the boards—and on a vastly larger scale—is Bandeirantes, a 5.2-million-square-foot mixed-use development that will include 1,600 apartments and 1 million square feet of retail space. The architects have sought to balance the need for access and circulation (20,000 people will move through the site every day) with the creation of a welcoming, sustainable environment, and, finally, with security—a constant concern in this city of 11 million.

The rules of real estate in Brazilian cities are changing, Rondon said; development companies, which used to be small family businesses, now often have boards to answer to and face increased competition. So developers "are realizing that design is a differentiator," he said. Dietzsch praised the city government of São Paulo for driving innovation, and said the city—sprawling, chaotic, and traffic-clogged—is attractive to architects precisely because there's so much to be done. "São Paulo is like a big problem" to be solved, she said. What architect could resist that?

WITH A POPULATION OF almost 200 million, Brazil has long been touted as a "country of the future"—for so long, in fact, that Brazilians joke about the tag. But an unusual confluence of good news in recent years does seem to justify its use. First, there's the rate of economic growth: Brazil's GDP grew by 5.7 percent in 2007 and by 5.1 percent in 2008, before contracting by a slight 0.2 percent in 2009. Here, the Great Recession was only a hiccup. Thanks to abundant commodities such as iron ore, timber, gold, grain, and coffee; massive oil reserves discovered in 2007; and a government that is supportive of free-market reforms, Brazil has become the world's eighth-largest economy. Capping all this off is the country's win of the world's two premier sporting events, virtually back-to-back: the World Cup, to be hosted at locations around Brazil in 2014, and the 2016 Summer Olympics, which will take place in Rio de Janeiro.

Hosting the World Cup and Olympics in quick succession will be "an incredible boost for Brazil," says Christopher Lee, a senior principal in the New York office of Populous, the global sports architecture firm. Populous has designed a World Cup stadium for the town of Natal in northeast Brazil, after working on two cities' bids (the other one, for the city of Rio Branco, was unsuccessful). The fact that Populous became involved at that early stage—when 17 cities in Brazil each bid to host a game or a series of them—reveals something of the inside-track nature of the selection process. Every city selected its own architects and other consultants to help put together a bid, and they tended to seek out local firms and/or international experts in stadium design, like Populous.

The Natal project will replace a 1950s stadium with a new 45,000-seat soccer stadium built to exacting FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) standards. The design includes many sustainable technologies, a move strongly encouraged, Lee says, by the local authorities. "You work everywhere, and wherever you are, there's some cursory nod: 'It's got to be sustainable.' I'm certainly finding on Natal and other projects [in Brazil] that ... sustainability seems to be something that's supported on very high levels."

On the same morning that he spoke with ARCHITECT, Lee learned that Populous' application to become a registered architecture firm in Brazil, through CREA (a council of regional licensing boards), had been approved. The firm will likely establish an office in Rio de Janeiro and a side office in Natal. Setting up a Brazilian company and securing CREA registration was "quite a big hurdle," he says, and required months of work, but will be worth it long-term: "This company believes there are great opportunities in Brazil, certainly for our world: sport and entertainment." Populous is "positioning to see how we can assist on the Olympics," Lee says; but even aside from that event, there are incredibly rich opportunities: Brazil has 80 soccer teams that regularly attract more than 25,000 spectators, Lee points out.

Because of the closed nature of the bid process as well as the highly specialized project type, World Cup and Olympics facilities are not, in fact, ripe for plucking by American design firms. Bernardo Fort-Brescia, principal

of Miami-based Arquitectonica, says it matter-of-factly: "It's not as much stadium work as people would think. It's not as glamorous as people would think"—because many of the projects are refurbishments of existing stadiums. Arquitectonica has had a São Paulo office for five years and now employs about 40 people there, all of them Brazilian. Fort-Brescia sees more activity in the commercial sphere: hotels, office buildings, shopping centers. The firm just completed a 1-million-square-foot office building in São Paulo.

Brazil is flush with retail projects, which have proved a lifeline for at least one U.S. architecture firm. Beame Architectural Partnership, a 25-person practice in Coral Gables, Fla., has been working in Brazil for more than 15 years. In the beginning, remembers firm president Larry Beame, inflation was so high, "my colleagues down there would spend 30 percent of their time managing their money so it didn't go away. Contracts would say, 'Pay me Friday at noon.'" But the hyperinflation of the early 1990s is a thing of the past, and now, with a number of office buildings and shopping centers to its name, Beame's firm increasingly looks south for new work. A longstanding client is gearing up to do three projects, and Beame would like to break into the Brazilian hotel market. Even if that doesn't happen, it beats the prospects stateside, he says: "The States is sad. Business is almost nonexistent."

Beame Architectural Partnership does all its work for Brazilian projects out of Coral Gables, taking projects through DD, then handing them off to a local architect. Not having a local office is a disadvantage, because Brazil levies a hefty tax—25 percent—on out-of-country payments for professional services. "We're less competitive to begin with, because salaries are higher here," Beame acknowledges, and then there's the tax. So clients "really need to believe they're getting some expertise and benefit they wouldn't get from their local architect."

"Clients are paying a premium to hire you; there's no way around it," agrees Mike Toolis, CEO of Chicago-based VOA Associates, which has a five-person satellite office, VOA/LB, in São Paulo. Toolis says that the office, focused on commercial projects, wouldn't exist if VOA hadn't had a connection to Brazil—a former employee, Marcos Bastos, was rehired by VOA to lead the Brazilian business.

Toolis is not so bullish on Brazil as many of his peers. Back in 2007, when the U.S. economy was on a tear, architects weren't heading to Brazil the way they were flocking to Dubai and China, he notes. "Brazil has not been a fertile market for us," he adds. "Most of the work Marcos has done there—he's pretty much eating what he's killed."

FOR U.S.-BASED ARCHITECTURE FIRMS that specialize in healthcare, expertise in American-style health delivery is the main selling point. Healthcare in Brazil is a mix of public and private options; there is a universal healthcare system that relies on government financing, but private care can be purchased through employers, or paid for out-of-pocket. As Brazil's middle class grows, so does the demand for private medical services. The research and consulting firm Frost & Sullivan reports that Brazil's healthcare market was worth $22.1 billion in 2009, a figure that is predicted to grow by 35 percent over the next three years.

Eduardo Egea and Tatiana Guimaraes have led the small São Paulo office of Dallas-based HKS since it opened in early 2009. Egea, a senior vice president at HKS and the firm's director of healthcare for Latin America, says

"WE'RE ESTABLISHING A NETWORK OF ASSOCIATE FIRMS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, AND THOSE FIRMS ARE WELCOMING US WITH OPEN ARMS. IT GIVES THEM AN OPPORTUNITY TO GO BEYOND WHAT THEY'VE BEEN EXPOSED TO SO FAR. AND [LOCAL CLIENTS], THROUGH COLLABORATION WITH A FIRM LIKE OURS, ARE EMPOWERED TO BE ABLE TO COMPETE IN A LARGER MARKET."

—EDUARDO EGEA, HKS

that Brazil started to pique his interest about five years ago. He had previously worked in Chile, and "things we saw in Chile 12 years ago, we started seeing them in Brazil." Chief among these was "a new middle class that is demanding to have access to better quality. And that includes everything: better hotels, better hospitals, better office buildings, better residences." And for HKS, strong in sports as well as healthcare, the World Cup and Olympics were a big draw. (Sure enough, HKS has become involved in planning for a proposed World Cup venue.)

Brazilian-born Guimaraes, an associate and senior medical architect at HKS (who is married to Egea, an American), trusts that her links to the Brazilian healthcare community will help grow the incipient business: Her father is the president of the Brazilian Society of Cardiology. Working in Brazil "is very much about who you know," she says. "Not the fact that you're Brazilian"—per se—"but the relationships you have, personally, can help."

That's one reason why the Brazilian offices of most U.S. design firms working here are led by Brazilians, and why they're staffed predominantly—or entirely—by local architects. But the main reason for hiring locals is cost. "There is a difference in remuneration between the U.S. and here," says Manoel Pereira, executive director of Kahn do Brasil, whose parent company is the Detroit-headquartered architecture firm Albert Kahn Associates. "We cannot afford to have regular foreign employees."

Kahn do Brasil was established in 1998—initially, it served mostly to collect payments from Albert Kahn Associates' first client in Brazil, Mercedes-Benz—and has since grown to a 26-person office with a deep portfolio of industrial and healthcare projects, many on behalf of São Paulo's prestigious Hospital Israelita Albert Einstein.

Pereira is frank about some of the less-savory business practices he has encountered—and about the difficulty of staying competitive while avoiding them. Brazilian labor laws place a heavy burden on employers; companies must pay an amount equivalent to one month's salary into every employee's pension fund, every year, and if the company dismisses that employee, it must then match 40 percent of the total amount in that fund. Consequently, many architecture firms evade the laws by not formally employing their staff, hiring them as consultants instead.

Pereira estimates that 60 to 70 percent of Kahn's competitors (mostly Brazilian firms) work this way, which gives them an advantage in terms of fees. They might also get kickbacks from manufacturers whose products they specify, another practice that Kahn eschews, Pereira says. (One reason why Kahn is "not growing as fast as we'd like to," he notes.) But the competitors' slippery ways also carry a risk: Companies that don't abide by the laws can be reported to the government and fined, or sued. Kahn do Brasil puts a special notice in all its proposals, notifying clients that the company operates according to the employment laws of Brazil, says Clift Montague, chief strategic officer at the Albert Kahn Family of Companies.

Pereira says clients are starting to expect more scrupulous behavior on the part of the firms they work with, and he still expects Kahn do Brasil to grow over the next five to 10 years. This period of growth, he predicts, will be different from what preceded it. Brazilians' attraction to American-style healthcare will no longer be the key driver: From here on out, thanks to Brazil's economic juggernaut, it'll be "just natural market growth." □

"WE GIVE [A LEVEL OF] ASSISTANCE TO THE CLIENT THAT'S NOT VERY COMMON HERE. WE SPEND MORE HOURS TO FINALIZE A JOB, BUT THAT MAKES THE CLIENT A LOT HAPPIER, AND THEY'RE WILLING TO PAY MORE TO GET US: BETWEEN 20 AND 30 PERCENT. EVEN SO, OUR COST IS SO HIGH [THAT] OUR PROFIT MARGIN IS SMALL."

—MANOEL PEREIRA, KAHN DO BRASIL

Arthur Brito, the director of projects for Kahn do Brasil, stands in front of the Vicky & Joseph Safra Pavilion at the Hospital Israelita Albert Einstein in São Paulo, completed in 2009.

THE RISE AND FALL (AND REBIRTH) OF **CSD**

HOW COULD ONE OF BALTIMORE'S OLDEST AND LARGEST ARCHITECTURE FIRMS SUDDENLY COLLAPSE?

TEXT BY ELIZABETH EVITTS DICKINSON

ED HORD REMEMBERS Sunday, Sept. 6, 2009, as a particularly sunny day in Baltimore. The senior principal of design firm Hord Coplan Macht (HCM) was at home when he received a phone call from Tom Spies, then the senior vice president of CSD Architects. Hord and Spies were practically neighbors—in business and in life—with offices blocks from one another and homes in the same bucolic neighborhood north of the city. HCM and CSD were not exactly competitors, but they did share a healthy rivalry; over the years, Hord and Spies had developed a kinship in the small pond that is Baltimore architecture. When Spies said he needed to talk, Hord told him to come right over.

They sat outside under a Japanese Snowbell tree as Spies unloaded his news. CSD, he explained, was in deep trouble. Hord, like most of his peers, had had no idea just how bad things were at the 62-year-old firm, one of the largest in the region. He'd had an inkling that business was down. There were significant rounds of layoffs over the previous months—all cataloged in the *Baltimore Business Journal*—but who hadn't had to jettison staff to survive the downturn? HCM itself had needed to lay off good people. Then there were the rumors about revenues. "We had heard that their ratios died, but we had heard that about a lot of firms," Hord recalls.

The rumors turned out to be true. CSD's cash flow had atrophied, leaving a seriously unbalanced ledger sheet. Revenue projections for 2009 were anemic—just $7 million,

down from $15 million the year before—while fixed overhead remained high. The company was, to quote CSD president David Dillard, about to "hear the sound of metal on metal." That could mean only one of three things: bankruptcy, a merger or acquisition, or something else altogether.

It was this third option that Spies wanted to discuss with Hord.

IN 1947, a young architect named Alex Cochran returned home to Baltimore. Born to a wealthy local family, Cochran had trained under Walter Gropius at Harvard, becoming a devout disciple of Bauhaus philosophy. Cochran was at first ambivalent about establishing a practice in his hometown, a place steeped in Georgian Revival, but he was convinced—in part by his former teacher Richard Neutra—that it was his duty to bring modern design principles to Baltimore. "Alex was to come here and spread the gospel of modern architecture. And he did," Spies says.

Cochran scandalized the blue-blood set when he brought flat roofs and expanses of glass to local residential design—including to his own home on Lake Avenue, completed in 1949. Cochran's biographer, Christopher Weeks, writes that the architect's mother refused to enter the house, dispatching messages to her son and his young wife from the driveway (where she was "safely insulated from the creeping Bauhausism").

The "S" and "D" in the firm's name—James Stephenson and Richard Donkervoet—soon joined Cochran, and together they built a practice known for pushing design boundaries while championing the humanistic ideals of the modernist movement. Cochran, who believed that design could be a tool of social change, partnered with developer James Rouse on significant housing projects like the low-income Freedom Apartments, completed in 1951. CSD engaged in everything from residential design to massive urban planning projects, contributing to the now-famous renaissance of Baltimore's downtown with the design of the city's Convention Center in 1979.

By the mid '80s, with 50 people on the payroll and the second generation ready to take the reins, the business began to change. "The firm started to specialize, and some of that had to do with the interests of the [new] leadership," Spies says. It also had to do with the shifting nature of architectural practice. The firm eased away from Cochran's mantra of broad generalization and moved, instead, to a firm with three legs: senior living, healthcare, and education. It also moved away from cutting-edge design. "Because we were doing larger commissions, dealing with boards of trustees instead of individual owners, we became bigger, more conservative, less edgy with the architecture."

Still, CSD became known as an effective firm that took exceptional care of its clients. "CSD had a great group of people," says Jamie Snead of local firm Ziger/Snead, who worked at CSD for several years in the 1980s. "They kept a client's best interests at heart, and they were very well respected." By the late 1990s, the three specialties were firmly entrenched, with senior living a major component of CSD's workload. Projects had popped up all over the country, and staff seemed to spend more time on airplanes than in Baltimore.

So, in 2002, a Dallas office opened to service the booming market in the South and Southwest. A seasoned senior living designer named David Dillard headed the Dallas branch and four years later became president of the firm, replacing Mike Bollinger, who had served for years as the president, CEO, and CFO.

Whereas Bollinger had consolidated leadership power, Dillard—a designer at heart—spread responsibility to a new CFO and COO, which allowed him to focus more on design. As Dillard began his tenure, the firm started thinking about moving from the second to the third generation of ownership. It was riding high on nearly $19 million in billings. Then the calendar clicked to 2008.

IN THE FALL OF 2008, the Titanic that had been senior living hit the proverbial iceberg. Multimillion-dollar projects simply dissipated or were put on indefinite hold. The Dallas office saw a 1-million-square-foot project in Naples, Fla., and a 30-story high-rise in Atlanta "instantly come off the shelf," Dillard remembers. "That will tend to send tremors around the place."

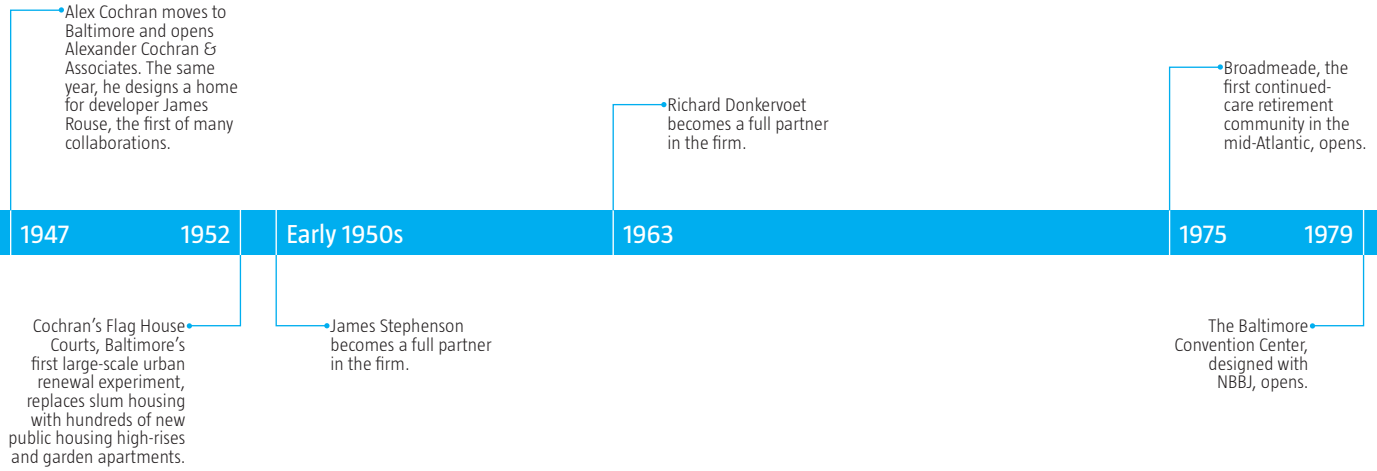
Former CFO Mark Debinski, who continues to serve as liquidation manager for CSD, says several things contributed to the demise of the company beyond the revenue loss. Because the firm is still in the final stages of liquidation, Debinski would not go into specifics or say how much debt CSD had accrued, except that it was "much higher as a percentage than was ideal for a firm." Dillard offers a telling example: "At the point of closure, we were five years into a 10-year lease of roughly 50,000 square feet. It was costing us north of $30 a square foot. That is a huge burden. And that was immoveable."

In addition to the expensive lease and legacy obligations to former partners, there was a third factor: high insurance costs related to inadequate risk management in the firm's past. "I cannot reiterate the importance of proactive risk management in order to maintain proper exposure," Debinski says.

Spies believes that survival today also requires a firm to have more breadth in its portfolio—that it must look more like the CSD of the first generation. "The firms that are doing best in a down economy are diversified," he says. "CSD basically had a three-legged stool, and one of those legs completely fell off. In hindsight, we should have had more legs on that stool to remain standing."

Dillard, however, disagrees. "Tom and I agree on 98 percent of things, but I think business will go to the experts," he says. "The days of the generalist are over. Diversification is easy to say, but it's very difficult to do, and I don't think a fourth leg would have helped us."

By the end of 2008, Dillard says, it was evident something needed to be done, and the firm began the "agonizing choreography" of eliminating staff in both offices. Four rounds of layoffs over the next 10 months



would eliminate 60 people. In the end, just 30 employees remained when the doors closed.

Katelin Crook, the firm's marketing manager, was one of them. She says staffers started making references to the show *Survivor* and formed alliances. There were pro-Dillard people, those who believed he was bringing fresh energy and design savvy to the firm, and anti-Dillard people, who thought he had plans to start his own firm.

Still, Spies says it took a long time for the Baltimore office to realize what was happening. "We were eternal optimists, and we thought projects would come along," he says. Dillard, in Dallas, had a different view. He and Debinski (who was hired as CFO in 2007) called for quick action as early as January 2009. "There was a diversity of opinion about when to do the wind-down. The CFO and I were collaborating in the cockpit, and we would have wound down CSD earlier. [The closure] was professional and friendly, but there was a clear two-party position for months. There was so much inertia of 62 years, the emotion of, 'How can we possibly let this crash?'"

"I do think there was a difference with the people who still practiced in the [Baltimore] area," Spies agrees. "Dallas had been in existence for seven years, so there can't be the same feeling of attachment as being CSD for six decades."

The top brass did agree that everything needed to be done to ensure that staff and clients had a safe landing. The board entertained a number of plans. Plan A was to carry on, which quickly became fiscally impossible. Plan B was to sell. CSD quietly began shopping itself to other firms, but by the summer of '09, no strong offers emerged. Plan C was bankruptcy, which everyone agreed was not a palatable option.

Then there was Plan D. It had two parts. D1: Break up the firm and sell viable components to competitors. D2: Dissolve and start new firms. "We like to call it a benign dismemberment," Debinski says of Plan D.

The Baltimore office went with Plan D1, effectively selling its education studio to HCM. It was a lightning-fast deal. Spies proposed the idea to Hord during their Sunday chat on Sept. 6. On Tuesday night, Hord gathered his executive committee, this time at his dining-room table, to hash out the details. HCM would make a strategic purchase of CSD staff and projects and would assume the contracts (and the risks) as written. This also required negotiating with the 40 or so consultants working on those projects; HCM struck 125 separate agreements with contractors in record time.

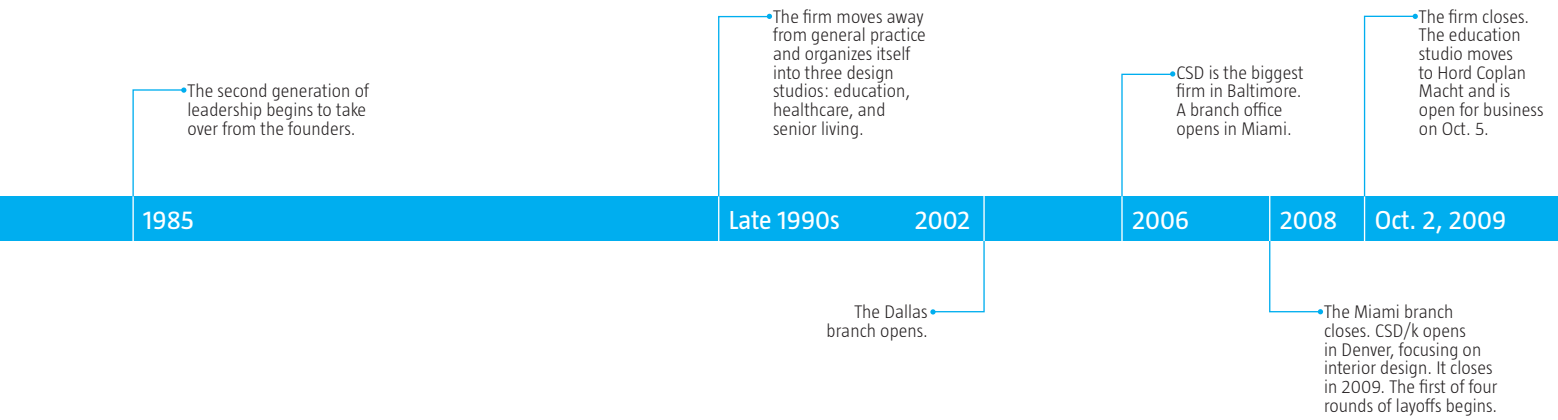
The week of Sept. 14, Hord and Spies went to clients to explain the situation and ask them to continue with HCM. "We were able to say to our clients, 'On Oct. 2, you're going to call me on the phone. On Oct. 5, you are still going to call me; it will just be on a different phone number. But it's the same contract, the same people, the same coming due date,'" Spies says.

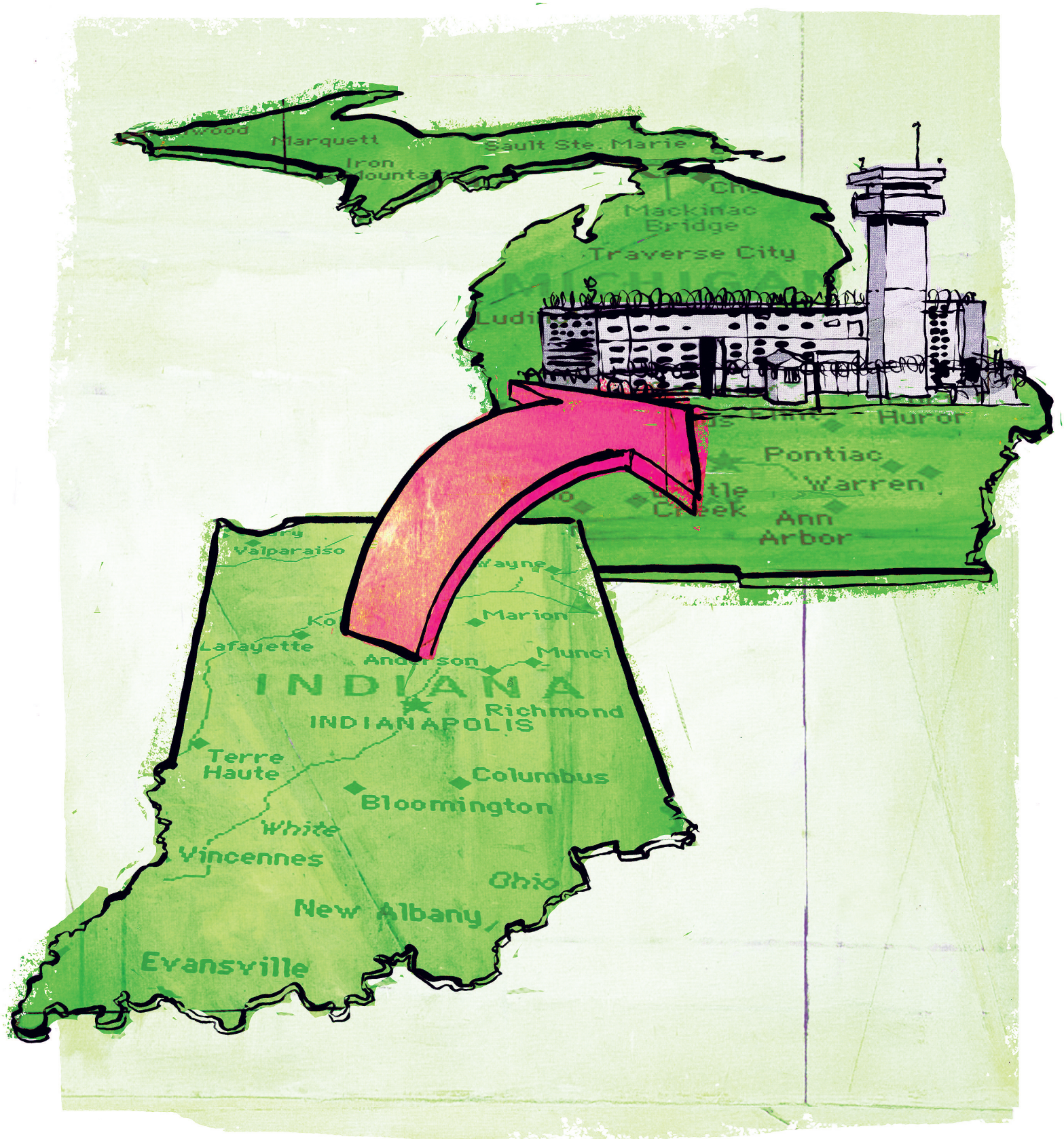
IN THE END, all clients made the switch, a signal of the loyalty and trust that CSD had built over its decades of practice. Twenty jobs were transferred from CSD to HCM, along with the staff in charge of those projects. Some projects had only weeks left until completion, and others had barely begun schematics. On Oct. 2, CSD closed. By 9 a.m. the next Monday morning, all of the computers and 13 staff were up and running at HCM.

"It was relatively seamless for clients. They simply saw different names on the letterhead," Hord says. He and Spies are unaware of other firms who have dissolved in this manner. Peter Piven of Philadelphia-based Peter Piven Management Consultants agrees that this type of deal "is certainly unusual." (Piven would not comment specifically on the details of this purchase, as he has consulted with both firms.)

Down south, David Dillard didn't even need to move. He started a new firm specializing in senior living and named it D2, in honor of the chosen dissolution plan. He kept the same office space, renegotiating his existing lease, and set about structuring a lean business plan based on the lessons he learned at CSD. Dillard kept his eight CSD employees and a number of existing projects. Meanwhile, several leaders in Baltimore's senior living studio went to local firm Brown Craig Turner.

The details of how and why CSD went under are still being debated by former employees. Crook and the rest of the staff had learned of the firm's fate just three weeks before the final day. She found out secondhand from one of her staffers, who was told of the closure while being let go. "It was never obvious this was the eventual outcome," says Crook, now marketing director at Ziger/Snead. "The whole industry was going through layoffs. I was always optimistic." So optimistic that she signed a contract on a new house just days before hearing the news. □

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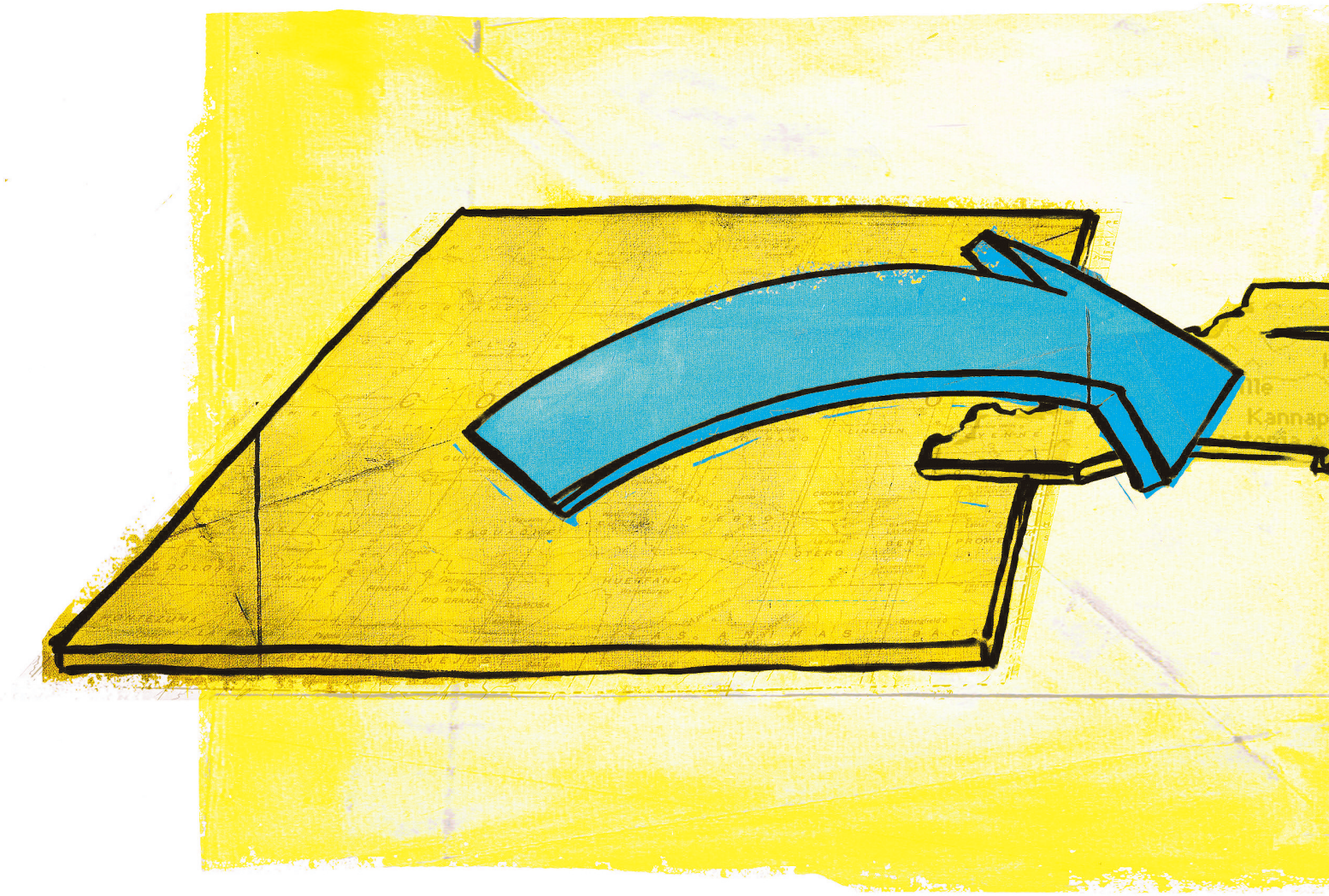
Terre Haute
Columbus
Bloomington
White
Vincennes
Ohio
New Albany
Evansville

OUR TOWN, OUR JOBS

THE LOCALS ARE RESTLESS: LOCAL ARCHITECTS, THAT IS. AROUND THE COUNTRY, ARCHITECTS ARE PROTESTING WHEN VIED-FOR PROJECTS GET AWARDED TO OUT-OF-STATE OR OUT-OF-TOWN FIRMS. BUT JUST BECAUSE THE ECONOMY HAS CHANGED DOESN'T MEAN THE RULES ABOUT HIRING ARCHITECTS FOR PUBLIC PROJECTS HAVE, TOO.

TEXT BY BRADFORD MCKEE
ILLUSTRATIONS BY PJ LOUGHRAN



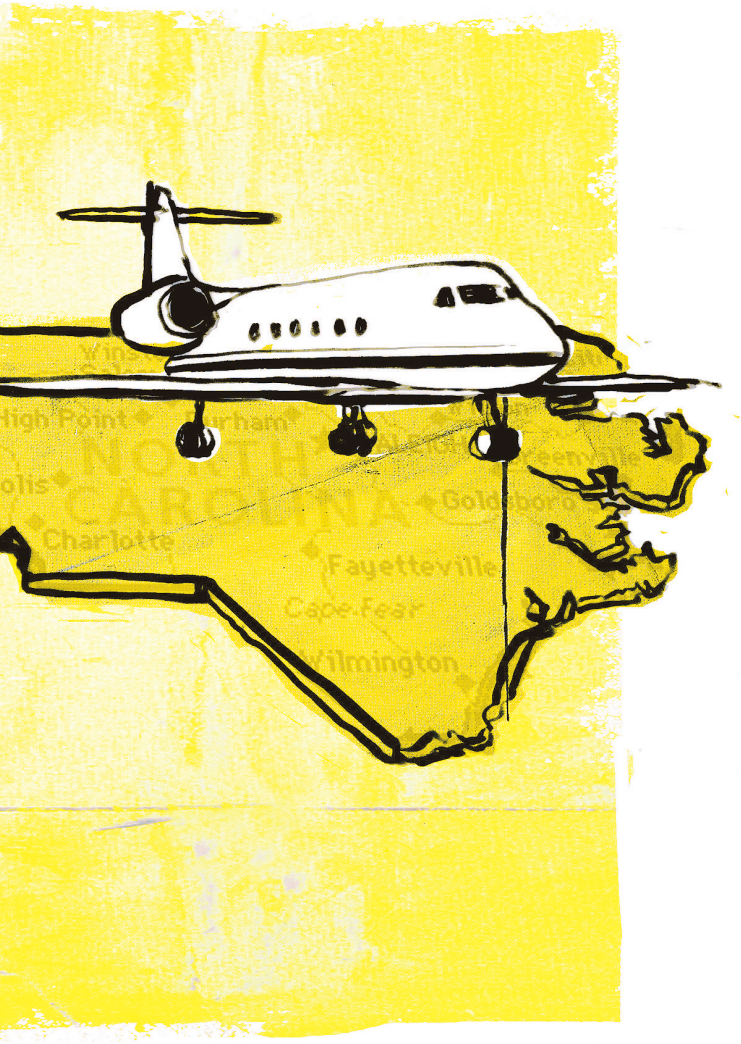
THERE'S BEEN A REAL STINK over the past several months among architects in Springfield, Mo., over the expansion of the Westport Elementary School. The project itself isn't the problem. The expansion plan is part of a $50 million bond issue for school construction that 65 percent of Springfield voters approved last Nov. 3; the low-cost bond was made possible by federal stimulus money.

The problem, for architects around town, is solely with the firm that the school district selected to design the $9.3 million project, which represents the biggest chunk of the new bond issue to be awarded so far: that firm is BCDM, based in Omaha, Neb. Over the years, BCDM has designed numerous schools, so its competency for the job is not in question. What rankles Springfield architects is BCDM's home address. The fact that it is not a local firm, or even a Missouri firm, has become a glaring and, to some folks, disqualifying handicap to working on the Westport Elementary expansion.

"That is local tax money," says Geoffrey Butler, the president of Butler, Rosenbury & Partners, an architecture and engineering firm based in Springfield. "We all, us architects, are going to be paying those bonds back, and [the school district is] just sending the money out of the state."

Butler Rosenbury was one of nine firms on a shortlist for the Westport project—BCDM was the only firm on the list from out of town—and Butler has come forward as probably the most vocal opponent of BCDM's selection. (Robert Mabrey, the BCDM principal overseeing the Westport project, declined to comment for this article.) Butler's firm has done some public design work away from its own home base, including a county courthouse in Boone County, Mo., and the Fulton, Mo., City Hall. Yet the selection of BCDM seems to have brought out his inner protectionist.

Butler is hardly the only person scoffing at a practice that has long been routine in architecture—namely, that of hiring architects who go beyond their own ZIP codes to compete for and win good jobs, fair and square, based primarily on their qualifications and bids. Most



"PEOPLE ARE MUCH MORE UPSET THAN THEY WOULD BE NORMALLY. AS THINGS CONTRACT WITH THE ECONOMY, AND AS VARIOUS ARCHITECTURE FIRMS ARE DRYING UP OR CONSOLIDATING, IT'S VERY DIFFICULT AND HAS PROMPTED A LOT OF THIS INFIGHTING."

—JUDY NADLER, SENIOR FELLOW IN GOVERNMENT ETHICS, THE MARKKULA CENTER FOR APPLIED ETHICS AT SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY

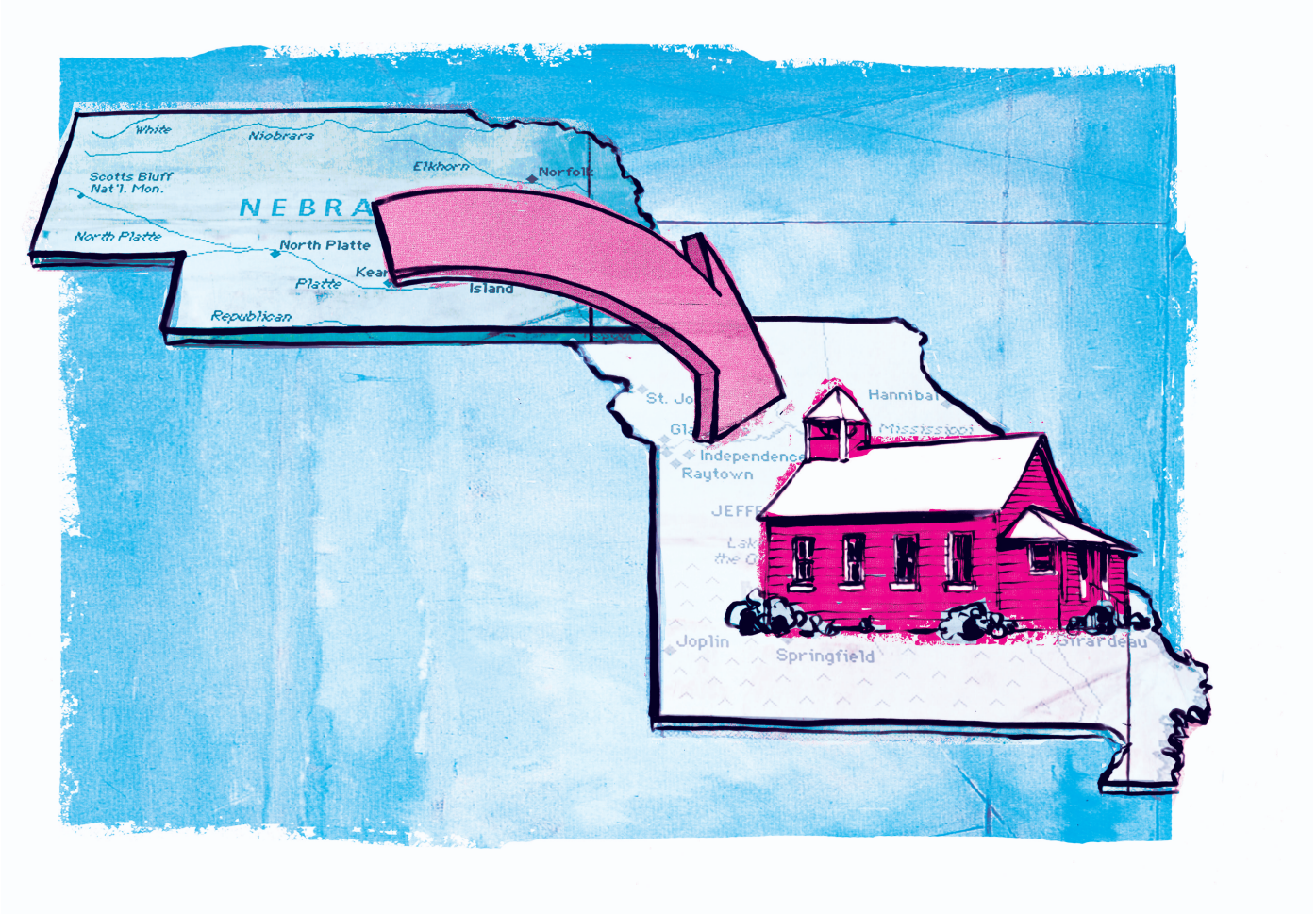
public procurement processes for design and construction are supposed to favor the lowest qualified bidder; honest people may, and often do, differ over who's more qualified and even which bid is truly lowest. (The AIA, for its part, supports selection based on quality alone.) But in the current construction climate, architects who enter markets outside their own backyards run the risk of having their local peers greet them with disdain, if not outright hostility—as if their very selection had crossed an always ill-defined line, and were suddenly unethical.

IN THE FIRST MONTHS OF THIS YEAR, as architecture billings continued to fall and firms laid off more people (or failed altogether), a number of testy situations have arisen around the country that involve public officials, public projects, and the selection of architects who aren't considered hometowners. Hardly anybody bothers to contest the hires of private developers; that's the developers' business, and besides, there hasn't been much private development since late 2008. That there aren't many public projects, either, given the stress on state and local budgets, is making the disputes over public project awards somewhat more bitter. Some architects see the public projects that are available as potential lifelines, and the talk around them can take on a proprietary edge.

County commissioners in Allegan County, Mich., have taken flak—from architects and others—for hiring an Indianapolis firm, RQAW Corp., to design a jail inside a former Haworth chair factory for $25 million. The city council of Aspen, Colo., erred, in the view of some, by awarding a city-funded affordable housing project to an architecture firm whose sin was being based not out of state, but in a different part of the state.

And though it was mainly by coincidence, shortly after LMN Architects of Seattle took a prize project in Cleveland—a $425 million project to design a huge new medical mall downtown—a group of Cleveland architects organized a local architecture fair to reintroduce themselves to the public. But the timing was poignant.

"A lot of major jobs go to out-of-town firms," as Bruce Jackson, an organizer of the



architecture fair and the president of AIA Cleveland, told *Crain's Cleveland Business*. "It's not just a Cleveland syndrome; it's worldwide."

Resenting outsiders who win work—and forming grudges against those who award it to them—is not new in American business. In architecture, the very fact of licensure can be seen as a form of protectionism, though its basis is mainly to protect health, public safety, and welfare. Lenore Lucey, who is the executive vice president of the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) in Washington, D.C., notes that many jurisdictions don't allow firms to look for work speculatively in-state without being licensed in the state, or what is known as "fishing without a license." One registration board, which Lucey declines to name, will go after architects who enter architectural competitions involving locations in its state without having the state's license. Lucey says that NCARB is pushing jurisdictions to allow out-of-state architects to look for work, as long as they obtain a license once they get work, but before the project begins.

By now, with technology making it possible to design any building for any place from any location, a lot of architects may have assumed that their colleagues have moved beyond the baser forms of protectionism. But the thankless situation into which many architects have sunk over the past couple of years has them feeling extremely nervous about survival.

"People are much more upset than they would be normally," says Judy Nadler, a senior fellow in government ethics at the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University in California. "As things contract with the economy, and as various architecture firms are drying up or consolidating, it's very difficult and has prompted a lot of this infighting."

Nadler, a specialist in government and contracting ethics who also is a former two-term mayor and council member of the city of Santa Clara, sees the localism syndrome as somewhat bigger than architecture and feeding on the despair the recent economy has wrought. She points to the local-hire laws that are being adopted or considered by several towns around the San Francisco Bay Area: Richmond, Calif., which had an unemployment rate of 9.2 percent in March, requires construction contractors with the city to hire Richmond residents as 20 percent of its employees—the quota is 30 percent for retail or administrative contractors. East Palo Alto requires 30 percent local hiring in designated redevelopment areas. Concord and San Pablo are mulling similar requirements.

IN FEBRUARY, the governor of North Carolina, Bev Perdue, brought local preferences to the state level. She signed Executive Order No. 50, which gives "North Carolina resident bidders" the chance to match the low bid for the state if their price comes within 5 percent or $10,000 of the lowest bid. The order's opening line refers to the state's "unprecedented rate of unemployment." This official in-state preference policy bothers Terry Yeargan, the head of business development in North Carolina for DPR Construction, in Morrisville, and not least because DPR is based in Redwood City, Calif. It also gives credence to the contentious architect-selection process he saw recently as one of eight board members on the Raleigh-Durham International (RDU) Airport Authority.

In November, the airport authority's staff recommended hiring Fentress Architects, based in Denver, as the lead design architect for its upcoming renovation of RDU's Terminal 1. (Cost estimates for the project have not yet been developed.) Fentress is known worldwide for airports it has designed in Denver and Seoul, among others, and it is already working on RDU's Terminal 2, a nearly $50 million job. One airport authority staff member, Dave Powell, told the authority's board that Fentress' firm, over one Raleigh-based firm and another based in Durham, "had the best understanding of what this project is about."

But at least three board members had a problem hiring Fentress again, simply because it's in Denver. One board member, Toni Lipscomb, is reported to have said at a meeting, "My bias is toward using local firms." The board's chairman, Robb Teer, objected to another contract for the same reason. The award ultimately went to the architects rated second-best by the staff, Pearce Brinkley Case + Lee, based in Raleigh. (Teer did not return a call seeking comment for this article.)

Yeargan says he joined in the consensus to choose Pearce Brinkley but wasn't entirely comfortable with the sentiment that drove the selection. "I fall back to: 'Let's pick what's right for the project first, and the right team,'" he says. "Other members of the board drew that line a little differently. They said, 'Let's first look locally.'" Yeargan adds that an airport authority, of all entities, needs to think globally, and make the qualifying experience of the architect its imperative. "This move toward protectionism can be a little tricky, if we're not careful."

The controversy in Raleigh-Durham is similar to the one in Springfield in that it centered around an architect who had previously worked with the public agency in question, but, on the second round, drew a much different reaction. Regarding the localist objection to hiring Fentress for the last terminal renovation, Yeargan says: "It wasn't raised at the time," though he notes that Fentress took as partners on that project O'Brien/Atkins Associates and the Freelon Group, both of which have addresses in Durham.

Back in Springfield, Geoffrey Butler will tell you that not much of a fuss was made a few years ago when BCDM was selected to design a brand-new $8 million school, Harrison Elementary, which opened in the fall of 2009 and was funded by a $96.5 million bond that voters passed in 2006. At that time, Butler says, "Everybody was pissed, but everybody was busy"—too busy to take a lot of time out for protesting the award.

But times have changed. Now, firms across Springfield are hurting badly for work. Butler's firm has shrunk to 26 people, from 88 before the recession began, and he says his business has dropped by 66 percent in the past two years. Architectural employment in Springfield is said to have fallen by 30 percent since the boom of the past decade ended. Another Springfield architect, Lisa Drew-Alton, of Sapp Design Associates, notes that her firm has completed a number of successful projects for the school district. "When they said they were giving it to the most qualified [firm], that really put salt in the wound," Drew-Alton says.

Architects in Springfield speak as if they'd been sold a bill of goods about supporting the November bond issue—as if the bonds were to be expressly earmarked for local benefit. Neither the schools superintendent Norman Ridder nor the district's director of business operations, Scott Wendt, returned several calls seeking comment for this story. It's not possible to learn their perspective on how they presented the potential of the bond issue, or to know the extent to which district officials may have considered the plight of local architects, or to know what exactly put BCDM of Omaha over the top for the Westport project.

In any case, architects and public officials alike should recognize that when they make a locals-only argument for assigning project awards, the contention goes far beyond whatever project is at hand, and beyond projects generally, to a larger economic argument that is simply hard to defend in a modern service economy. And almost invariably, those who care to complain conspicuously about the workings of a contracting framework that has long been in place have at some point benefited from it, too. Feelings are quite raw among architects these days, but it is unhelpful to pretend that the ethics of public procurements have changed just because architecture and construction have been upended by a lousy economy. □

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>
> —TERRY YEARGAN, BOARD MEMBER, RALEIGH-DURHAM AIRPORT AUTHORITY

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TEXT BY KATIE GERFEN
PHOTOS BY TODD EBERLE

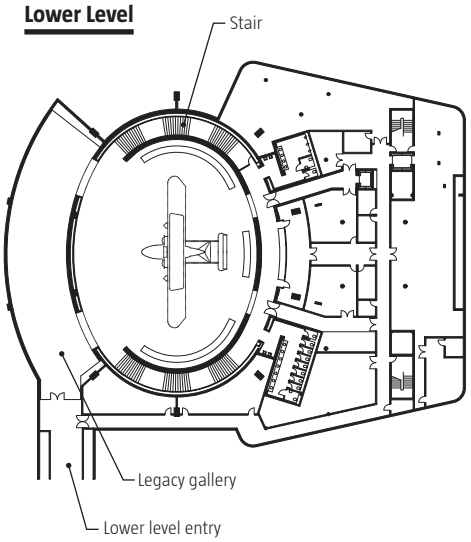
FORTALEZA HALL

RACINE, WIS.
FOSTER + PARTNERS

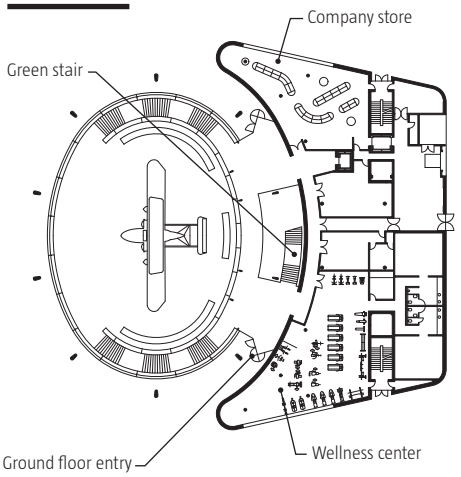
THE BASIS FOR A BUILDING'S DESIGN is often rooted in something seemingly inconsequential: a napkin sketch, a material sample, or, in the case of the new Foster + Partners–designed Fortaleza Hall, on the SC Johnson campus in Racine, Wis., an airplane. This isn't just any plane, however, but the Carnaúba—a replica of a 1930s twin-engine Sikorsky S-38 amphibious plane. The late SC Johnson chairman Sam Johnson flew the plane to Brazil in 1998, with his sons Fisk, the current chairman and CEO, and Curt. The father-and-sons flight team replicated (down to the aircraft) a 15,000-mile-roundtrip journey made 63 years earlier by Sam's father to see the source of the Carnaúba palm, the waxy leaves of which are used to make what was then the company's most famous product. (Wax has since been eclipsed by the company's other brands, like Ziploc.) When Sam died in 2004 and the idea for a memorial building took shape, his plane became the central conceit.

"What's wonderful about [the plane] is that it's a very fine-filigree piece of engineering," says Giles Robinson, partner-in-charge on the project. "When we developed the structural system for Fortaleza Hall, it was very important that it be a very elegant and simple backdrop to the complexity of the plane." But building a contemporary, minimalist structure on SC Johnson's campus is a fraught proposition, given the iconic context. Fortaleza Hall, and the attached Commons building, sit between the Golden Rondelle (the company's Lippincott & Margulies–designed pavilion for the 1964 New York World's Fair) on one side and Frank Lloyd Wright's iconic 1939 Administration Building and 1950 Research Tower on the other. "It's a very fine balance—purely because every architect studies the Johnson Wax building—between wanting to do something that is contemporary, yet sensitive to that building," Robinson says. "A lot of work goes into getting it right."

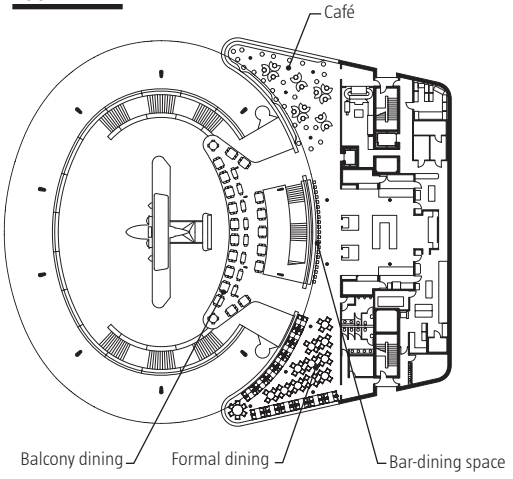
Lower Level



Ground Floor



Upper Level



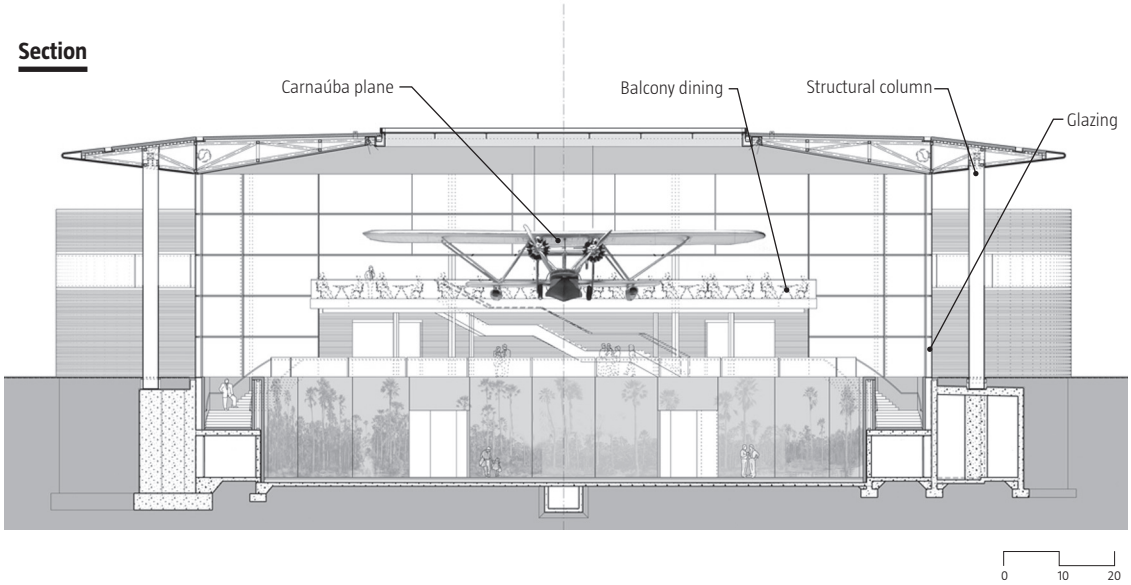
Foster + Partners effectively designed two buildings in one, each having its own name and material properties: the glassy Fortaleza Hall and the predominantly masonry Commons. Together, they add 60,000 square feet of employee-focused space to the campus. Fortaleza Hall's minimal form consists of an elliptical glazed shell and overhanging roof. The structure is supported by 10 steel columns, made from custom-designed hollow steel sections. Inside each column is a downspout, allowing rainwater that collects on the roof to run off without requiring the clutter of an exposed gutter system. And despite conventional wisdom that would dictate putting as much glass as possible between inside and out (the average January low temperature in Racine is 13 degrees), each of the 85 curved panes is single-glazed laminated glass. "We were very keen to avoid distortion in the glass, which you get with toughened glass," partner-in-charge Giles Robinson says. "It's regular annealed glass, but laminated to deal with any potential failure, and that system introduced onto the framing system produced what we consider the most elegant solution." Each panel is 7½ feet tall and 16 feet wide.

The Commons is a much more solid-looking building. Its brick mass—incorporating employee amenities such as eateries, a wellness center, a bank, a concierge, and a company store—curves around to envelop the east side of the glass pavilion. In contrast to Fortaleza Hall's intentional transparency, the Commons is constructed with self-supporting masonry walls made out of Kasota stone from the same quarry that Frank Lloyd Wright used for the copings of his Administration Building. "I think we were very conscious that we didn't want to mimic or ape the Wright building," Robinson adds, "but we did introduce the bull-nose curves on the end of The Commons that have a resonance to [Wright's] architecture."

1. Suspended from the ceiling, the Carnaúba is the dominant visual element of Fortaleza Hall. Despite its size, the plane actually puts less stress on the roof structure than winter snow will. Still, extra steel members were put in place and tied into the roof's main truss system, and a mechanism was installed to allow the plane to be raised and lowered at will. Most employees enter the new building on the lower level, emerging from a system of tunnels that allow them to move between campus buildings during the harsh Wisconsin winters. "The experience the staff have when they come out of the tunnel and into that main space is really opening up to the plane [and] the sky," Robinson says. "It's a really strong sense of light that draws you up to the ground level." And when they do emerge, their path to one of the staircases leading to ground level takes them over a floor mosaic of the western hemisphere, made from four different types of end-grain FSC-certified wood.

2. The central skylight brings additional daylight into the space and ensures that the plane is adequately lit during the day. "There was a danger that if there wasn't enough illumination, the plane would go very dark," Robinson says. In a recessed trough around the skylight, focused downlights were placed to illuminate the rest of the triple-height space. Alongside those light fixtures are speakers, with counterparts hidden in the benches on the lower level, that pipe in sounds from Brazil via a link to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. "It could be the sound of a boat in the harbor," says Kelly Semrau, vice president of global public affairs and communication for SC Johnson, "or it could be voices speaking in Portuguese in a café or noises that you hear in a rainforest. It's very subtle and doesn't play all the time. But when it does, it feels like you're living in that sound." Also calling to mind the Brazilian landscape are the 17 white precast concrete panels that line the lower level. The acid-etched pattern on the 19-foot-high, 11-ton panels forms an image of a Brazilian palm grove, sourced from a photograph taken on H.F. Johnson Jr.'s original 1935 expedition to Fortaleza, Brazil, the city from which the building takes its name.

Section



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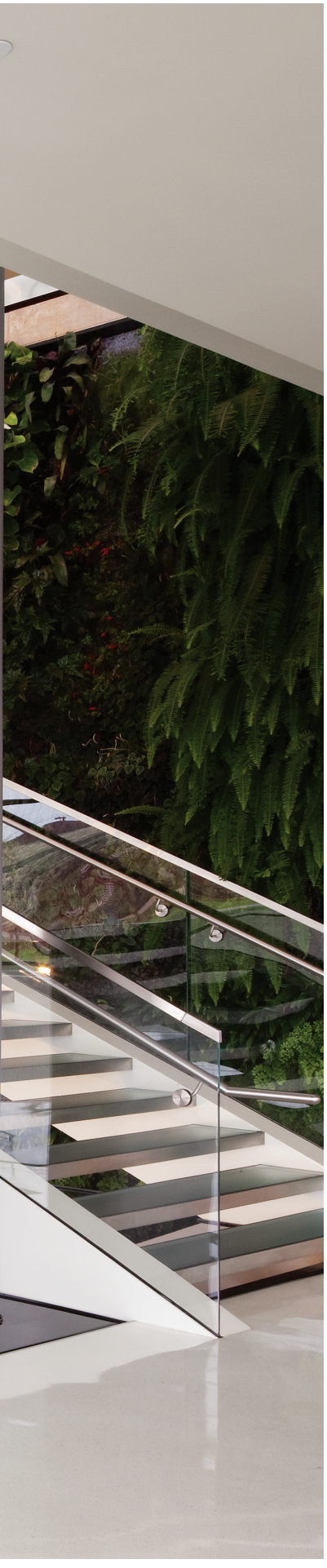

2

1. A green wall was designed as a backdrop for the stair linking the ground floor and the upper level. Foster's office worked in conjunction with Paris-based Patrick Blanc, the mastermind behind such installations as the vegetated façade of Jean Nouvel's Musée des Arts Premiers Quai Branly in Paris. The wall is constructed with a series of horizontal pipes placed on the surface of the wall. These pipes are covered with a felt that has pockets cut in it, into which the plants were placed. The wall features 2,500 plants from 79 different species that are native to Central and South America, and tries to recreate the sense of a lush Brazilian landscape. "The reason we wanted it in the space is [that] it makes the space living and organic," Semrau says. "It's such a bright splash of color; it's almost like a canvas." In front staircase is a waterfall, with water emerging from a recessed slot in the ceiling and falling 14 feet to a reflecting pool on the floor. "It almost sounds like a light rain," Semrau says. "It's right below where you sit in the [balcony dining area], and it is a wonderful white noise."

2. The staircase in front of the green wall leads to the upper-level balcony, on which the building's four eateries are located. At the base of the stairs is the southern ground-level entrance, which was put in as an alternative to the tunnels. "I think Fortaleza Hall is very much about encouraging the staff not to go down into tunnels, but to circulate around campus at ground level," Robinson says. "I think [the] staff have always tended to move about below ground both in the winter, when it's a necessity, but also in the summer. I think it's force of habit." Another entry, on the northern end of the hall, accommodates visitors coming from the Golden Rondelle, which has been turned into the tourism center of the complex.

1

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1. The balcony in Fortaleza Hall is at eye level with the Carnaúba. "You almost feel like you are floating up in the clouds with the plane," Robinson says. Designed as a part of the glass pavilion, the balcony serves as a bridge to The Commons and as one of the new building's four employee eateries. Giving those employees direct access to the plane was very important to company chairman and CEO and Sam's son, Fisk Johnson, as a means to engage them with his family's and the company's history. That history is detailed in a ground-floor gallery, which features artifacts from Sam Johnson's journey.

2. The other three dining spaces are found in The Commons. On the south side is a more formal dining room; in the middle, above the green stair, is a long bar; and to the north is a more casual coffee house–style environment (shown). All of these spaces have views to the plane. In contrast to the light tones and finishes of Fortaleza Hall, the spaces in The Commons feature a much warmer materials palette. Bamboo floors and rich brown leathers "give a greater sense of warmth and uniqueness to those spaces," Robinson says. And they get a lot of use; the employee reaction has been overwhelmingly positive. "The employees are wowed," Semrau says. "The space is packed every day, and it is a hub of activity."

Project Credits

Project Fortaleza Hall and The Commons, Racine, Wis.
Client SC Johnson
Architect Foster + Parters, London
Architect of Record Epstein, Chicago
Structural Engineering Buro Happold
M/E/P Engineering Cosentini Associates
Experiential Elements Consultant Ralph Appelbaum Associates
Vertical Garden Patrick Blanc
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Sound Consultant Charlie Morrow Productions
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TEXT BY MIMI ZEIGER
PHOTOS BY PAUL WARCHOL

U.S. LAND PORT OF ENTRY

CALAIS, MAINE
ROBERT SIEGEL ARCHITECTS

WHEN ARCHITECT ROBERT SIEGEL received the commission to design the United States Land Port of Entry in Calais, Maine, the easternmost border crossing between the U.S. and Canada, he didn't instantly start sketching—he went on a road trip. In the middle of winter, Siegel and project manager Eduardo Ramos left their New York office, jumped in the car and visited more than 20 border-control stations in the Northeast. Driving back and forth between the two nations was revealing, even as it raised a few patrol officers' eyebrows. The architecture at each crossing was universally banal, if not downright off-putting: acres of asphalt, bad signage, and antiquated and undistinguished buildings. Not exactly a warm welcome to the United States.

→

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Siegel's field research led to a 100,000-square-foot facility designed as a gateway for the car and truck traffic that flows into New England. As part of the U.S. General Services Administration's Design Excellence Program, the border crossing has to strike a careful balance between being inviting and answering the security needs of the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

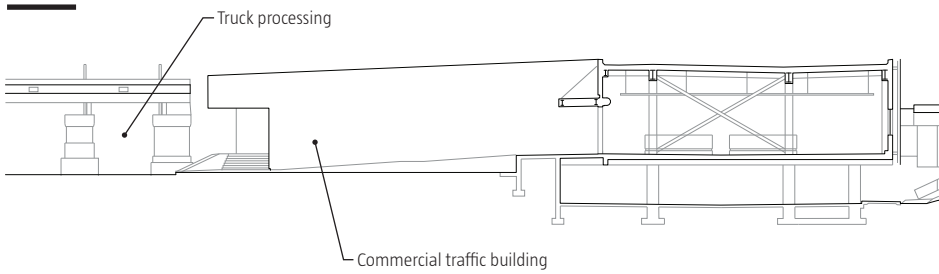
Seen from the highway, the Land Port of Entry's two low-slung buildings frame a slice of the Maine landscape. Approaching the facility, commercial traffic veers right, where the checkpoint structure is equipped with warehouses big enough to off-load and inspect truck cargo. The left lanes process noncommercial (car and bus) traffic. And while most cars that pass under the large steel canopies get quickly waved through border patrol on primary inspection, some are stopped and the drivers brought into interview rooms for additional questioning and a secondary inspection. A secure detention area is available in the event of a worst-case scenario. (And there's even a firing range for officer training.) A walkway, tucked out of the public's view, allows officers to pass between the commercial and noncommercial wings.

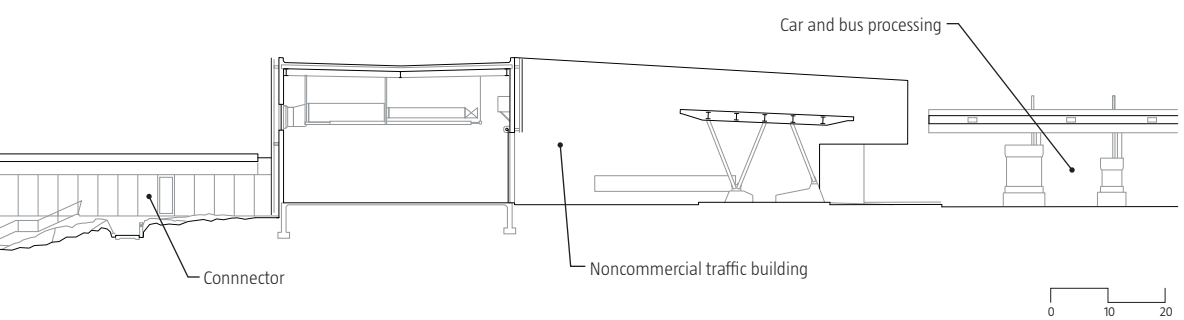
The facility is on track for LEED Gold certification, and many of its sustainable features come from attention to the landscape. It sits on top of an aquifer that feeds the nearby town, so bioswales were used to naturally filter runoff back into the water table. Additionally, the design team took care to reduce the amount of asphalt used across the site.

Although an exacting program, environmental constraints, and operational needs drive the buildings' layouts, a poetic understanding of the landscape inspired Siegel's scheme. "We looked to the site's history—it was formed by glaciers scraping across the land. I see cars passing through the border, carving through the landscape, as the modern-day version of the glacier," he says. A courtyard between the two structures represents that geologic influence quite literally: It's filled with chunks of granite excavated during construction, repurposed into an artificial moraine—the rock debris left in the wake of a glacier.

Siegel's fascination with the boulders' textures also influenced the design of the metal rainscreen that wraps the two buildings. Each 10-foot-tall and 40-inch-wide expanded-aluminum mesh panel is patterned to look like granite. "We created a drawing that has the same gestalt as a rock," Siegel explains. "Then we made a 3D model of it, creating valleys and ridges." More than decorative, the metal skin creates a layer of security. When sunlight hits the façade, the mesh appears solid, but ample daylight reaches the interior. The aluminum panels conceal windows cut into the basic stucco walls beneath so that officers on the inside of the buildings can survey all activity, but the public cannot see in. Like many aspects of the Land Port of Entry's design, the metal screen reveals the tension between the buildings' two objectives: to be welcoming and to be safe.

Section

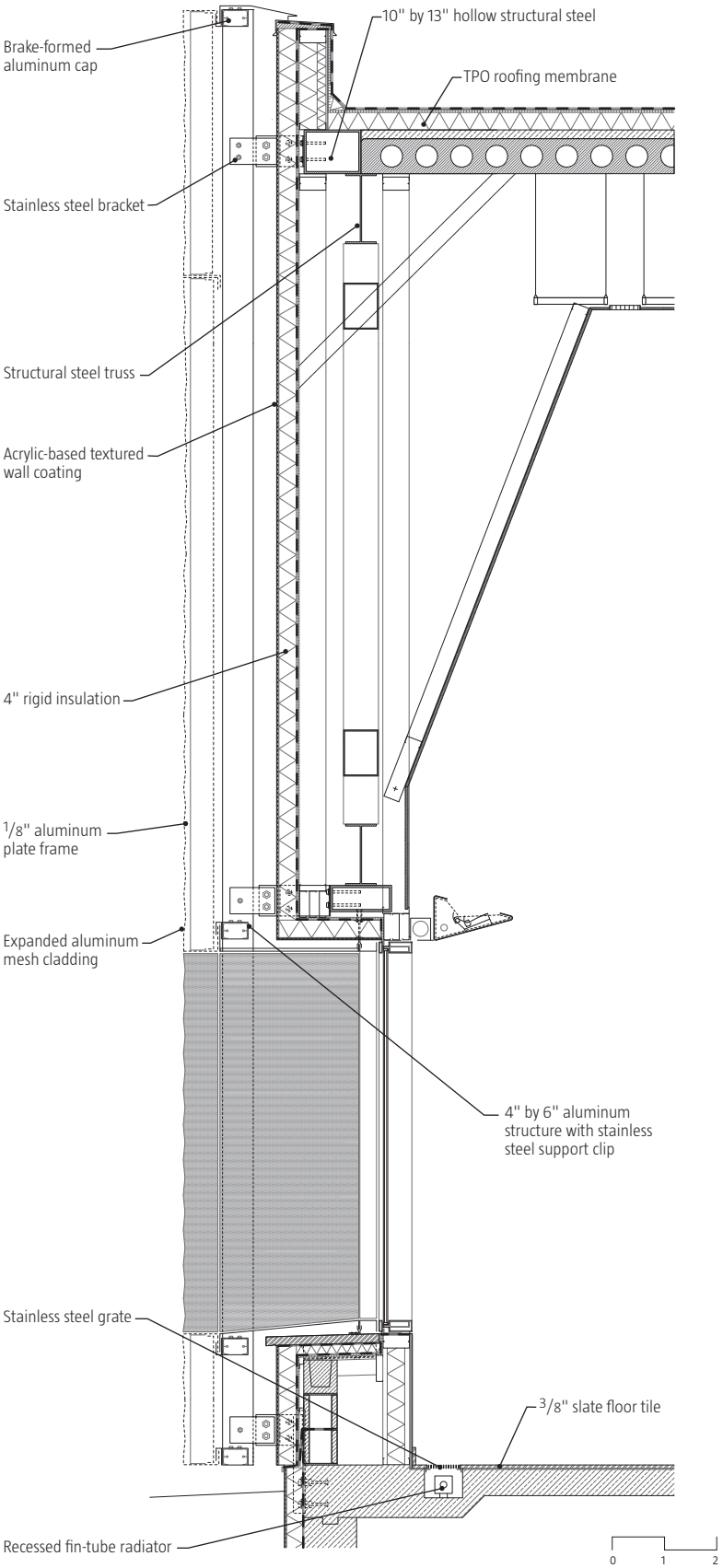




The Land Port of Entry in Calais, Maine, is split into two main volumes to accommodate traffic across the border: Noncommercial car and bus traffic is processed through the building on the left, while commercial traffic moves through the building on the right. And a lot of vehicles will pass through: When it opened last year, the U.S. General Services Administration projected that the Land Port of Entry in Calais would become the eighth-busiest crossing on the U.S.-Canadian border.

Most of the buildings' surfaces are clad in a custom-designed rainscreen. Expanded-aluminum mesh (with 50 percent porosity) was stamped in a solid-aluminum press (milled with a custom pattern) to give the mesh a crumpled texture that mimics the surface of the granite boulders found on the site. The panels were designed not only as a nod to the landscape, but also to provide important security. Fixed to stucco exterior walls with stainless steel brackets, the panels conceal window openings but still permit a view out for the officers inside. During the day, the sunlight reflecting off the aluminum makes the concealed windows nearly undetectable to drivers passing through, while still admitting daylight. But at dusk, or in shaded areas such as those under the vehicle canopies, the interior lights make the windows visible.

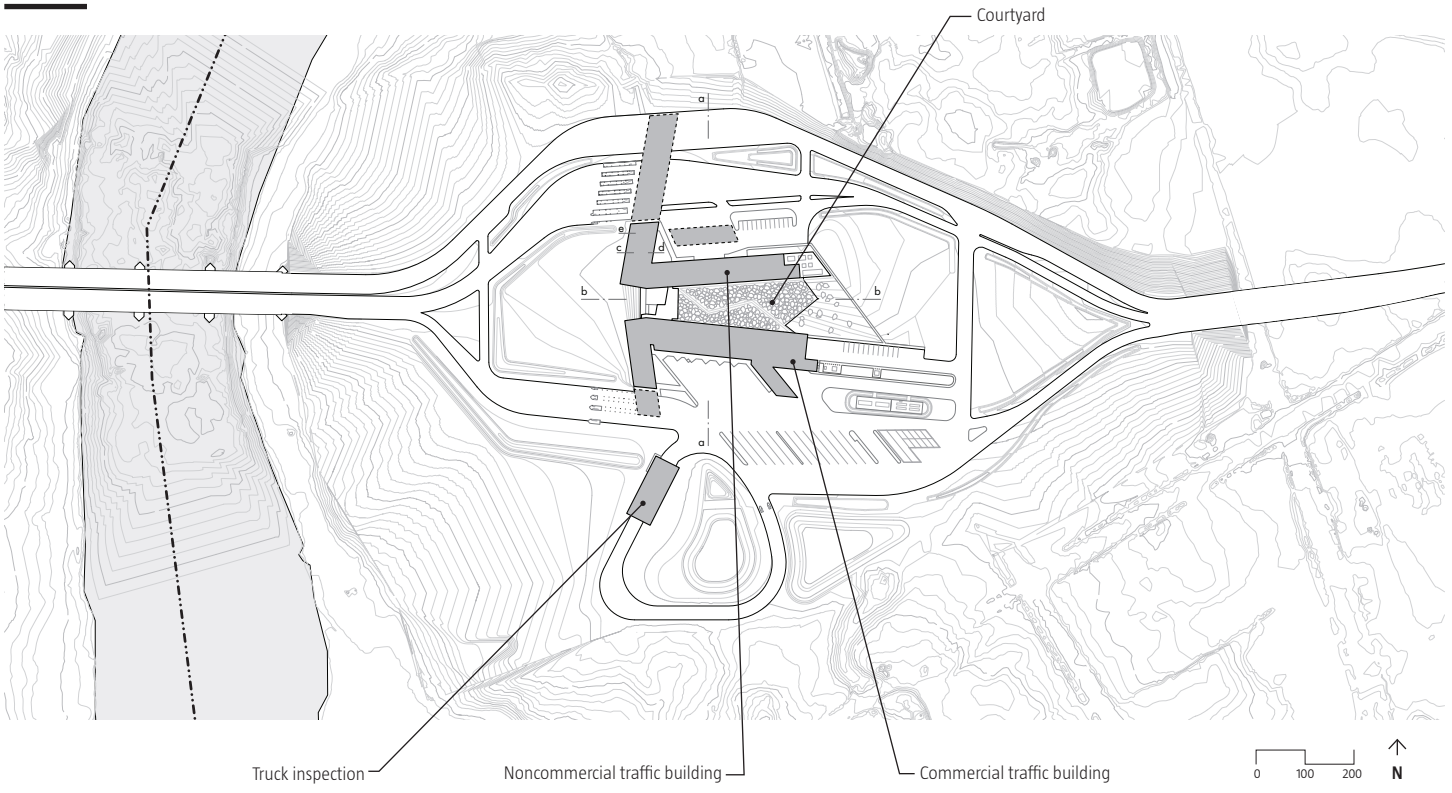
Rainscreen Section



1. The separation of commercial and noncommercial operations into two buildings allowed Siegel to create a secure central courtyard. Hidden from public view by an enclosed bridge at one end and a berm at the other, the landscape design—on which the architects collaborated with Sasaki Associates—is a literal interpretation of the site's history as a glacial path. Granite boulders found during site excavation were salvaged and arranged here as a nod to the rocky path left behind by a glacier.

2. A continuous run of uncovered vision glass—the only one in the facility—clads the corridors that face onto the central courtyard. Hidden from public view by a berm, the west end of the courtyard is capped by an enclosed walkway so that personnel can securely travel between the buildings.

Site Plan


Courtyard
a
b
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e
Truck inspection
Noncommercial traffic building
Commercial traffic building
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100
200
N

1. Border control officers must meet stringent requirements, such as passing regular firearms certification tests. To that end, the program of the border station includes a shooting range. Not required in every GSA border station, this is the only such facility in Maine. The walls and standard lay-in ceiling are clad in an absorbent acoustical foam which has a convex pattern formed into its surface. The back wall, behind the targets, is a bullet trap—a surface composed of rubber pellets that collects the bullets and lead and is periodically cleaned out.

2. The main lobby of the noncommercial vehicle building at the Land Port of Entry is where bus passengers and others stop to show passports and get processed through border control. One of the few public spaces in the complex, the space features a bamboo and stainless steel document-processing desk behind which the border control officers sit. Workstations are concealed by a bamboo wall behind the main desk; a break in the wall allows officers seated at those workstations to have 360-degree visibility. A similar but smaller desk can be found in the public lobby of the commercial traffic building next door.

3. Most vehicles pass through the Land Port of Entry with little incident, but facilities are available for interviewing travelers and performing secondary inspections on vehicles—which can include searching the contents of a car or passenger vehicle in this area in the noncommercial traffic building, or unpacking and cataloging the cargo of a commercial vehicle in a separate area on the site.

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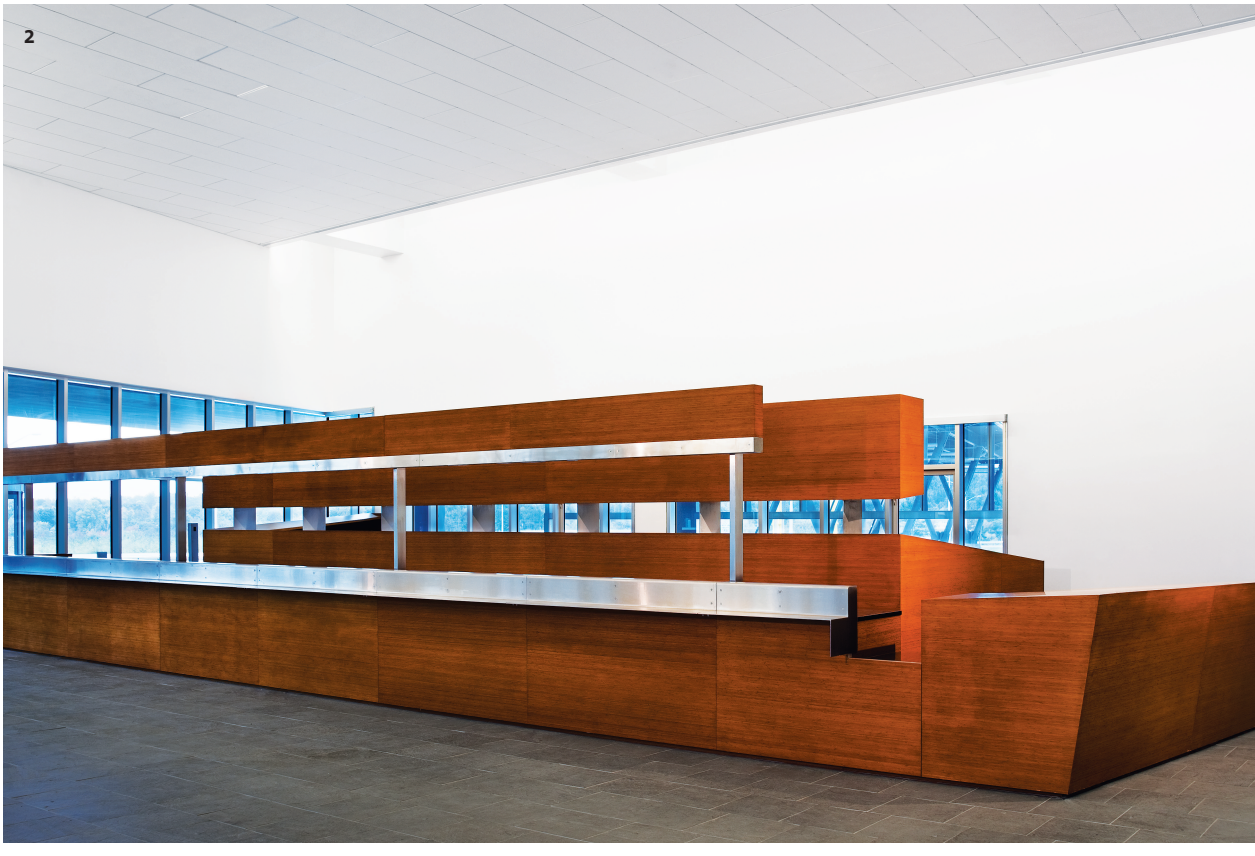

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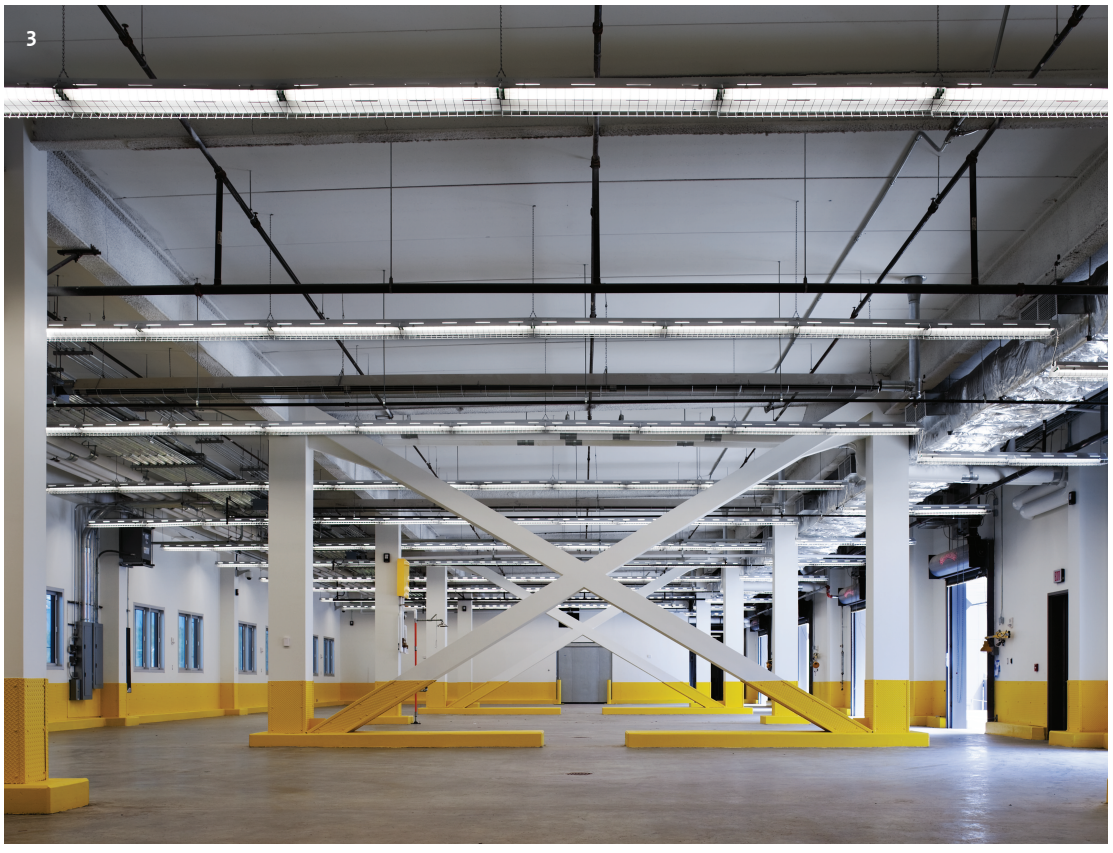

Project Credits

Project United States Land Port of Entry in Calais, Maine
Client/Owner United States General Services Administration
Architect Robert Siegel Architects, New York—Robert Siegel (principal, lead designer); Eduardo Ramos, Richard Tobias (project managers); Brad Burns, Julien Leyssene, Wayne Walker, Holly Williams, Heather Pfister, Justin Huang, Fatmir Hodzic, Kelsey Yates (project team)
Mechanical/Electrical/Structural/Civil Engineer/Lighting Designer Arup
Construction Manager Coast and Harbor
General Contractor J&J Contractors
Landscape Architect Sasaki Associates
Façade Consultant Front
Size 100,000 square feet
Cost $53 million

Materials & Sources

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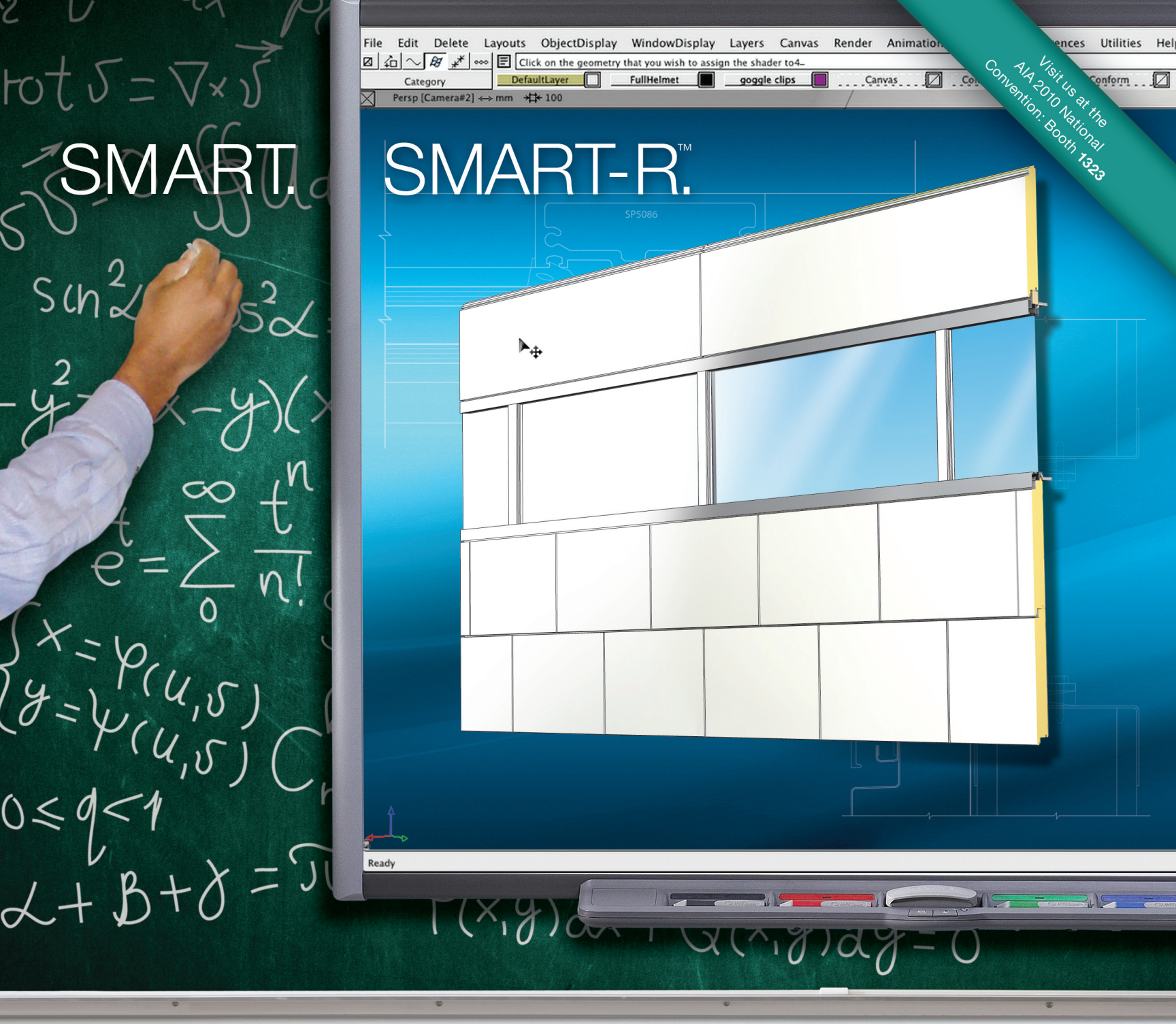

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PHOTOS BY © ALBERT VECERKA/ESTO
(EXCEPT WHERE NOTED)

DIANA CENTER

NEW YORK
WEISS/MANFREDI

SOMETIMES, ARCHITECTURAL complexity comes in a simple form, even a box. The Diana Center, designed by New York–based Weiss/Manfredi for Barnard College, looks simple: a five-story glass prism served straight-up. Its terra-cotta color matches the largely brick Barnard and Columbia University campuses, which face each other across Broadway.

A closer reading, however, reveals a narrative of complexity. The façade is paneled in glass, but not in a display of transparency for transparency's sake: Some panels have a graduated frit; others are shadow boxes, with space between a translucent glass outer layer and a second opaque inner layer. The functions inside the building establish whether the panels will be opaque, transparent, or something in between. A swath of

→

transparent glass rises diagonally up the Broadway façade, revealing a stepped, four-story atrium full of activity.

In 2003, the architects won an invited competition to design the building as a student center, with classrooms and studios devoted to art, art history, architecture, and theater. The college wanted a mixed-use building whose circulation and adjacencies would help catalyze interaction between students, faculty, and the various disciplines.

The architects—the firm's full name is Weiss/Manfredi Architecture/Landscape/Urbanism—acted as their own consultants, applying their several disciplines simultaneously. They developed the site, landscape, and plans together as an integrated and complex whole.

The former building on the site, the McIntosh Center, was built in 1969, when institutions that were then allergic to the city walled themselves off self-protectively. The fortresslike building even divided the campus, with a front plaza and a daunting flight of stairs higher than Milbank Hall—the oldest structure on campus—next door.

Weiss/Manfredi's design was urbanistically corrective. The glass façade, which meets the street, invites the urban gaze into the building. A front door along Broadway serves a café, as well as a black-box theater and an elegant, wood-paneled event oval, both on basement levels.

On the campus side of the building, the architects struck a sight line from the entrance of Milbank Hall across Lehman Lawn to the campus' famous wrought-iron gate, resulting in a wedge-shaped plaza that sliced the seven-story prism into a wedge. The architects landscaped the plaza into grassed terraces stepping down gently from the lawn to the Milbank courtyard. They also invited the landscape up into the building: A terrace adjoining the lawn leads into the café, and then up the open tiers to the second-floor dining room, third-floor reading room, and fourth-floor gallery. The terraced spaces are all transparent to each other, and to views from the lawn. The building remains public all the way to the grassed roof (the architects are targeting LEED Silver certification).

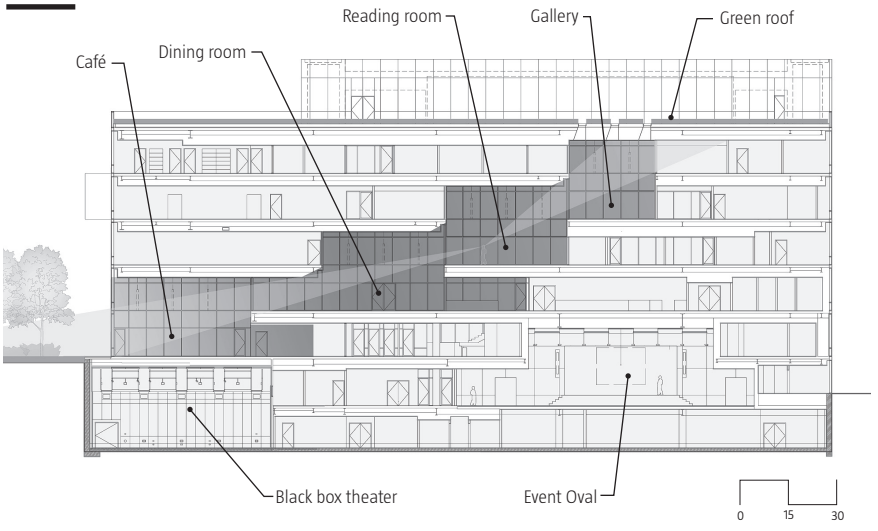
The landscape and building are both sectional ladders of student life. The façades are always occupied. "The students own the building," design partner Marion Weiss says.

The building that shifts vertically in section also shifts horizontally: Nowhere is the plan simply extruded. A wandering, glass-enclosed fire stair steps up the west façade, meandering in and out of the building's floor plate, and the rooms expand and contract throughout the building according to programmatic necessity.

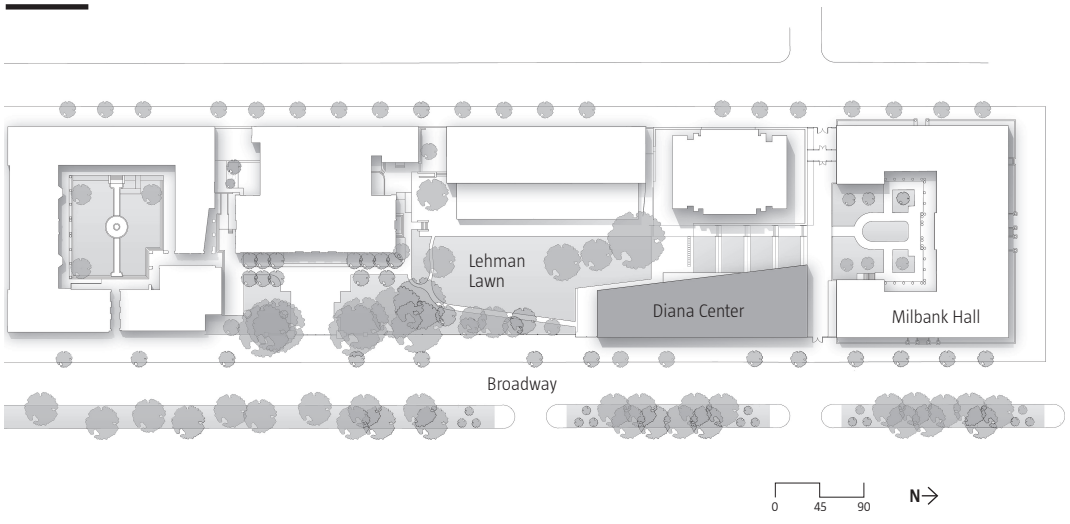
The architects have created a *gesammtkunstwerk*, a design addressing urbanism, architecture, landscape, and social life. And that design addresses both the big picture and the small: The hazy quality of the shadow box façade panels is echoed in translucent resin tabletops.

The building's character is both urban and urbane. The scale is generous, and the sequence of spaces both civilized in its processional quality, and experiential in the way it unfolds. Above all, the building that replaced McIntosh Center did not do so by reiterating what design partner Michael A. Manfredi calls "the clichés of historicism—cornice lines, brick, trim." The architects looked forward rather than back, and so set the best possible example for students exploring their own creativity.

Section



Site Plan



The east façade of the new Diana Center stretches along Broadway and gives Barnard the street presence that it has been lacking for nearly 40 years. The façade incorporates terra-cotta-colored glass shadow boxes, panels with a graduated vertical frit, and panels of vision glass, giving an indication of the programs happening within: classrooms, offices, a black-box theater, and event space. But it is the series of four slipped atria (containing a café, a dining hall, a reading room, and a gallery) that are the building's defining gesture. "It's a really transformative building for the campus," says Barnard College president Debora Spar. "Our challenge now is to bring the rest of campus up the level of the Diana [Center]."

1. Projecting from the building's west façade is an articulated volume that is mostly filled with, of all things, a fire stair. A way to add dynamic circulation, the clear vision panels showcase students walking though the corridors. The topmost level of the stair volume houses a lecture room and hides HVAC vents above.

The terraced green space can be used for everything from informal gatherings to outdoor performances. The sloping levels were designed to create a smooth transition down to the historic Milbank Hall (Barnard's oldest campus building), which was cut off from the rest of campus when a massive concrete plinth was installed in the 1960s. The restored circulation and sight lines create a more unified campus environment.

2. On the building's southwest corner, a projecting volume houses a studio space for senior architecture students. Clad in clear vision glass, the room stands out from the rest of the copper-toned façade. Before getting to work in the building, the students had a chance to influence its design. "The color of the building is something we spent a huge amount of time on. We must have gone through hundreds of options," vice president for administration Lisa Gamsu says. "We took full-scale mock-ups and hung them on the lawn and students voted. It was a fun process."

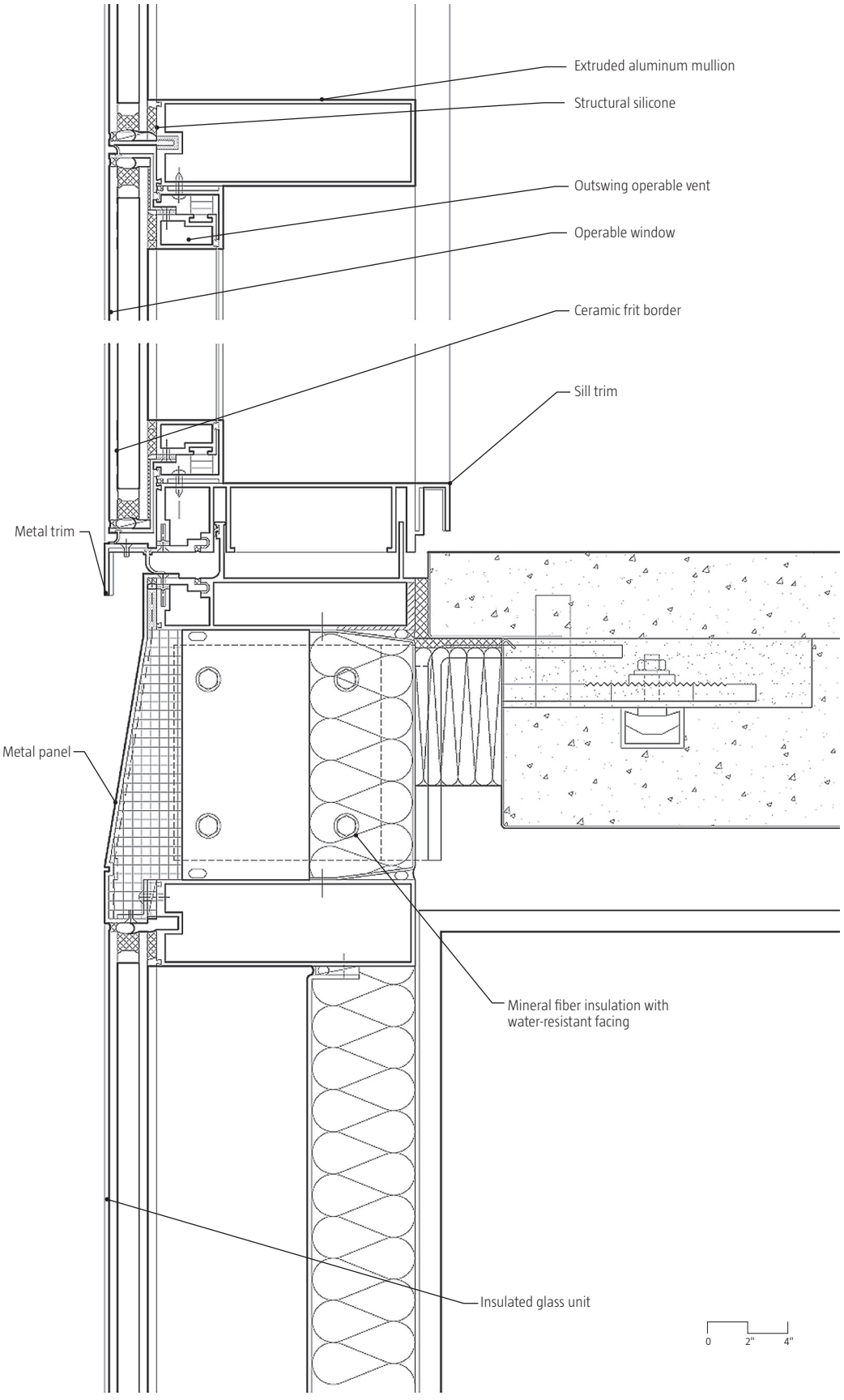
OPPOSITE: PAUL WARCHOL

2

On the west side of the building, the projecting fire stair is clad in clear vision glass through which student activity can be seen, creating a dynamic façade. Certain spaces—like the open area in front of the building's elevator, seen here above the entry doors—have been claimed by students as informal study lounges. Furniture was brought in to accommodate them. "The students are in the building 24 hours," Spar says, and "they've made it their own."

At the time of the building's soft opening in fall 2009, much of the break out furniture had intentionally not been ordered. Since most of it was designed by Weiss/Manfredi, the goal was to see how the pieces were used in different spaces, so that the fabrication of the pieces could meet specific needs.

Curtain Wall Section



TOOLBOX

The highly varied curtain wall of the Diana Center illustrates one tenet of chaos theory: simple systems can breed complexity. There are only three types of modular glass panels in the building's curtain wall, even though the complexity of the patterns defies easy recognition.

One type is the shadow box, which is composed of two layers: a color-integral glass panel in front and a metal pan set 4 inches behind. The glass panel, provided by Goldray Industries, is acid-etched on its exterior surface to give a matte texture, and fritted with a terra-cotta color on the interior surface. The metal pan is painted bright red, with a coating from Linetec. The refraction of light through the glass and reflection off the metal pan produces a hazy, softly luminous effect that changes with the angle of the sun, and the colors inventively relate to the surrounding brick façades.

The second panel type is double-glazed and acid-etched in vertical striations graded from opaque to transparent. The fritting—designed to maximize daylighting—occurs on the facing interior surfaces of each glass pane in the double-glazed unit, so a small gap separates the lines. Hoppers are used with these panels to allow natural airflow into the building.

The third panel type is a clear, double-glazed unit, which is used primarily in public spaces, such as the fire stairs and atria.

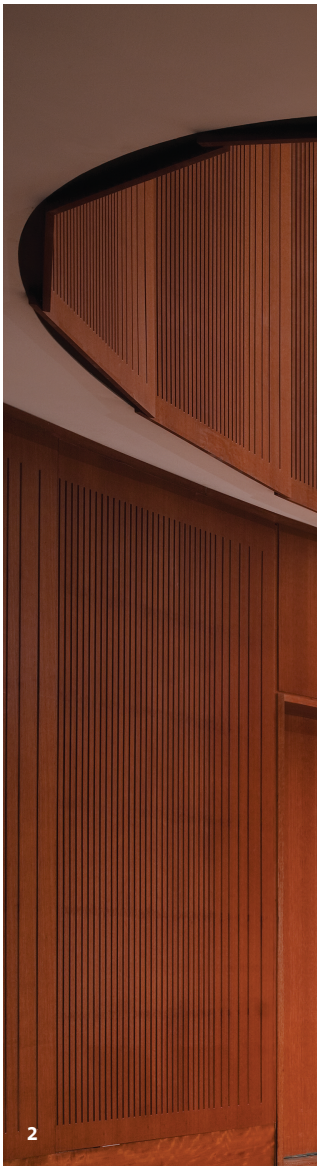
The three panel types come in four sizes, which are combined to result in uniform 5-foot curtain-wall modules (2-foot panels pair with 3-foot panels, and 3-foot-9-inch panels pair with 1-foot-3-inch panels). The building's 1,154 panels create shifting, but related, patterns determined by the functions of the spaces inside.

"The colors change depending how the light and its angle play with the etching," says Weiss/Manfredi design partner Marion Weiss, "shifting from dull copper brown to copper red. The colors enter into a conversation with the traditional buildings. The idea is a building that changes over the course of a day."

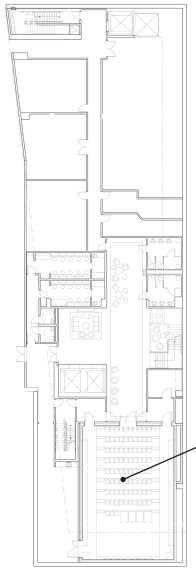
BUILDING 1 2 ③

1. The ramps and switchbacks in the fire-stair volume create not only the building's primary circulation, but also an intentionally choreographed sequence of student and faculty interaction. Separated from the inner volume of the building by fire-rated glass, the projecting volume meets all codes for fire egress, and gives students, who spend the bulk of their time indoors, a chance to connect to the rest of campus.

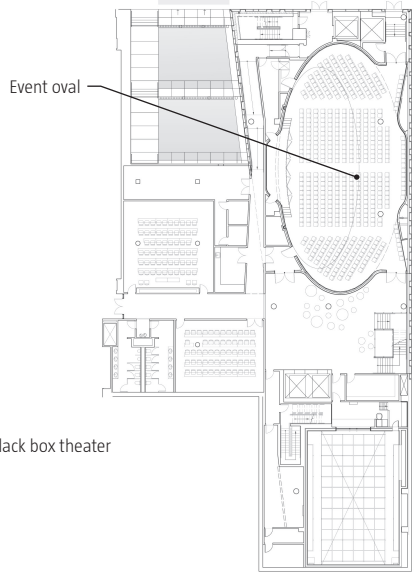
2. The double-height event oval is tucked into a lower level of the Diana Center. Available for everything from group yoga classes to alumnae events, it was an integral part of the program from the very beginning. Acoustical material is hidden behind bent wood panels and revealed by milled slats that mimic the pattern of the graduated frit on the curtain wall. For events that fill the space beyond capacity, the rest of the building is equipped with closed-circuit televisions.



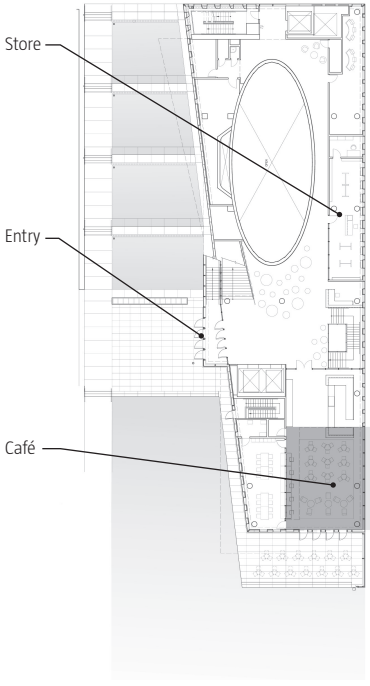
Lower Level 1



Lower Level 2



Ground Floor



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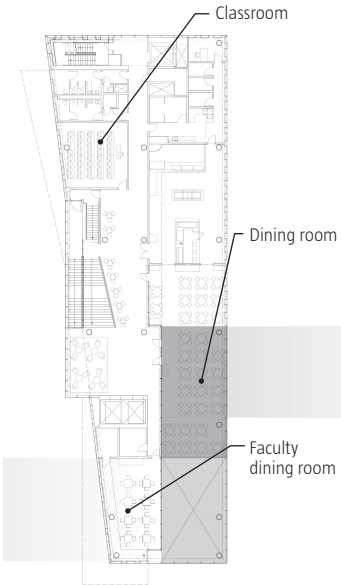
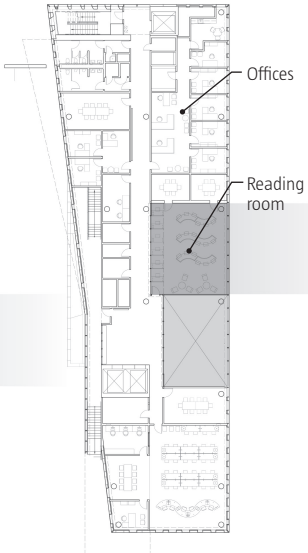
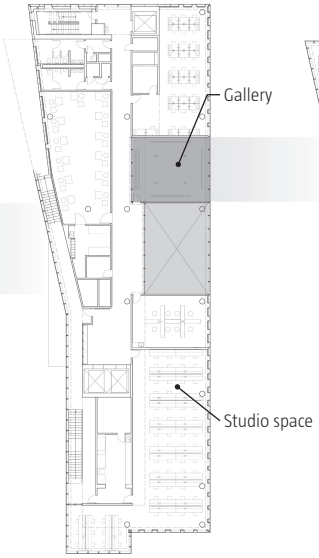
Second Floor



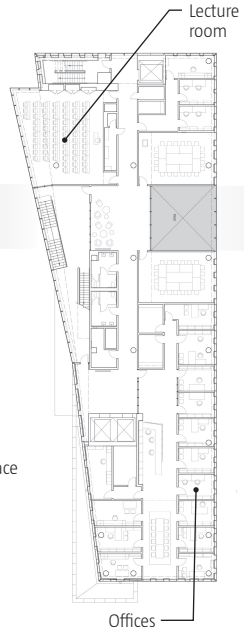
Third Floor



Fourth Floor



Fifth Floor



Roof Level

BUILDING 1 2 3

1. From the café in the southeast corner of the ground floor, students can see up through the slipped atria to a more formal dining area, a reading room, and finally into an art gallery on the fourth floor. The architects branded this series of spaces with tones of red and orange, similar to the tones used in the façade. Much of the furniture was custom designed, including the resin tabletops, which were a collaboration with 3form. The café has computer workstations tucked against the west wall; a fritted glass wall encloses the faculty dining room on the second floor, which looks down into the café space.

2. In the third-floor reading room, custom-designed, serpentine rows of carrels, as well as nooks tucked into the west wall, allow for private study. The architects custom-designed the carpet with Bentley Prince Street, and it transitions from deep red tones on the first floor toward oranges and yellows in each ascending atrium.

The reading room overlooks the more formal dining area, which doubles as a study lounge in off-hours: "Once the dining service closes, that room stays full," says Gamsu. "Even thought it's a double-height space, the proportions feel just right. The visual stimulus is just wonderful, but it's quiet and peaceful."

1

OPPOSITE: PAUL WARCHOL

2

Project Credits

Project The Diana Center, New York
Client/Owner Barnard College—Lisa Gamsu (vice president for administration/project manager)
Owner's Representatives Roland L. Ferrera and Patrick Muldoon
Architect and Interior Designer Weiss/Manfredi Architecture/Landscape/Urbanism, New York—Marion Weiss and Michael A. Manfredi (design partners); Mike Harshman (project manager); Clifton Balch, Kim Nun and Yehre Suh (project architects); Michael Blasberg, Beth Eckels, Hamilton Hadden, Patrick Hazari, Todd Hoehn, Bryan Kelley, Justin Kwok, Lee Lim, Nick Shipes, Michael Steiner (design team); Patrick Armacost, Kian Goh, Jason Ro, Yehre Suh, and Tae-Young Yoon (predesign team)
M/E/P/FP/Vertical Transportation Engineering Consultant Jaros, Baum & Bolles
Structural Engineer Severud Associates
Civil Engineer Langan Engineering and Environmental Services
Construction Manager/General Contractor Bovis Lend Lease
Landscape Architecture Consultants HM White SA
Lighting Designer Brandston Partnership
Curtain Wall Consultant R.A. Heintges Architects Consultants
AV/IT/General Acoustics/Security Consultants Cerami & Associates with TM Technology Partners
Food Service Consultant Ricca Newmark Design
Retail Consultant Jeanne Giordano
Cost Estimator AMIS
Sustainability Consultant Viridian Energy & Environmental
Theatre Consultant Fisher Dachs Associates
Theatre Acoustic Consultant JaffeHolden Acoustics
Size 98,000 square feet
Construction Cost $57 million

Materials & Sources

Carpet Bentley Prince Street bentleyprincestreet.com
Exterior Wall Systems Architectural Glazing Technologies archsky.com; Enterprise Architectural Sales enterprisearchitectural.com
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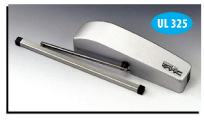

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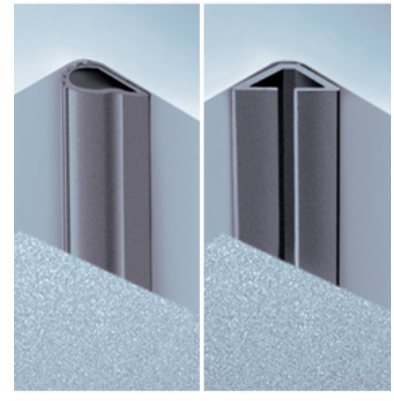

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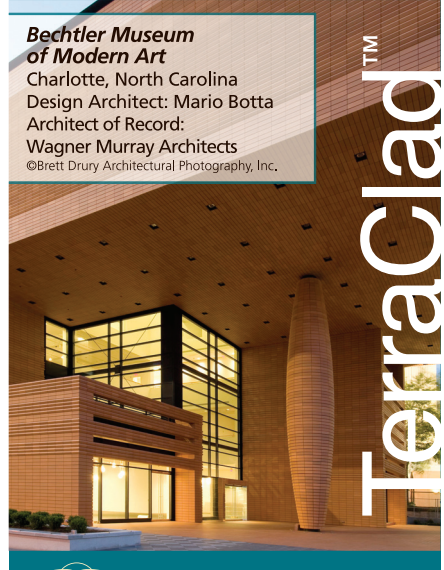

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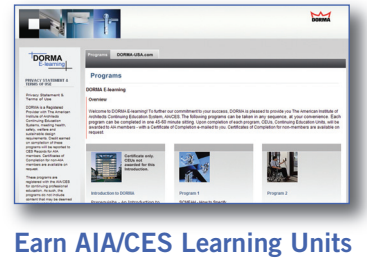

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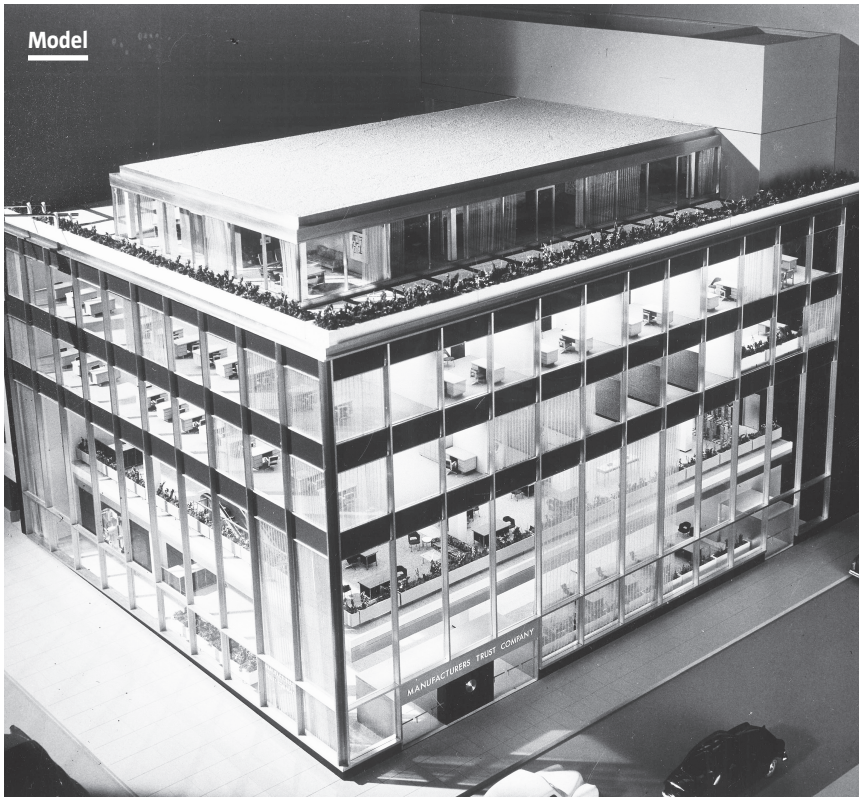

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TEXT BY THOMAS FISHER

OUR GREAT BANKING halls have become as endangered as our great banks. Skidmore, Owings & Merrill's Manufacturers Bank (now known as Manufacturers Hanover Trust), a citation winner in the first P/A design awards program in 1954, has miraculously survived on Fifth Avenue in midtown Manhattan. Designed by Gordon Bunshaft, it is a five-story, 94,000-square-foot, glass-walled Miesian box dwarfed by the towers around it. The original design reflected the relative openness and leisurely pace of post-World War II banking, with its Henry Dreyfuss–designed vault door visible from the street and its Harry Bertoia–designed mixed-metal screen presiding over an expansive and sparsely furnished mezzanine banking hall.

The alterations to the building show how banking has changed since then. A row of ATMs has replaced the original ground-level tellers' stations, with an awkward glass ceiling separating the entrance from the mezzanine above as new security risks have arisen from the replacement of people by machines. A clothing store now occupies most of the once-uncluttered ground floor; likewise, standard office cubicles now crowd the main banking hall, obscuring the metal screen and the public largesse that it represented. With banks these days, the public largesse often goes in the opposite direction, in the form of bailouts rather than Bertoia screens.

Now, after 56 years, the building's luck may have run out. A large sign advertising it as a "big box retail opportunity" fills the Fifth Avenue corner. Architects have certainly suffered at the hands of bankers of late, but let's hope this extraordinary work of architecture doesn't as well. □

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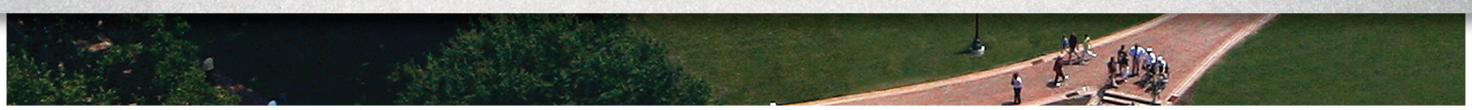

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